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ABSTRACT

This report describes the Learning Is For Everyone (LIFE) program, a community involvement initiative developed by the Washington County, Tennessee, schools to increase the level of family involvement in the schools to raise student achievement levels. The LIFE program's primary focus in 1989-90 was to establish a positive attitude toward education in students in kindergarten through second grade. Children, parents, and teachers participated in six major activities: (1) the Bowdoin School Parent Education Program for parents to make them more effective educators at home; (2) the Family Math Program to help parents teach basic math skills to their children at home; (3) the Parents Assisting School Success (PASS) Program to help parents better understand how to work with their children; (4) the Pre-Kindergarten Screening Program to identify at-risk students before they start school; (5) the Summer Enrichment Program to help at-risk students improve their academic skills; and (6) several Teacher Training Workshops to help teachers work better with parents. Each of these programs is examined in detail, and specific procedures developed to evaluate each program component and the LIFE program as a whole are discussed. The report notes that, overall, the 1989-90 LIFE program was very successful in meeting broad goals of creating new parent-school partnerships. (MDM)

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# LIFE (LEARNING IS FOR EVERYONE) PROGRAM EVALUATION

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Washington County Tennessee

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Program Date: October 1, 1989 - September 30, 1990

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# LIFE (LEARNING IS FOR EVERYONE)
# PROGRAM EVALUATION

## I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### A. The Washington County School System

The Washington County School System is located in the Northeast corner of Tennessee and in many respects is representative of the typical county school system in the region with approximately 60-70 percent classified as rural. During the 1989-90 school year there were 8401 students attending the Washington County Schools. Approximately 36% were enrolled in grades K-4; thirty-three percent (33%) were in grades 5-8 and thirty-one percent (31%) were in grades 9-12. Approximately 40% of all students qualify for free or reduced lunch, indicating the low socioeconomic backgrounds that many students being to school. The average per pupil expenditure was $2689 in 1989-90, which ranks the Washington County Schools tenth out of the thirteen school systems in the First Tennessee Congressional district.

The two high schools in the Washington County Schools serve very different populations within Washington County. Daniel Boone High School serves the northern portion of the county while David Crockett High School serves the southern end of the county. Each of these ends of the county are different and a different set of feeder schools feed each of these high schools. Daniel Boone High School is located between Johnson City and Kingsport and serves a community populated primarily by workers from these more industrial areas. Roads in this northern portion of the county provide easy access to these cities and have lead to substantial residential growth in this area in the past several years.

David Crockett High School, on the other hand, is located outside of Jonesborough, Tennessee and serves a more rural area, with many of the families represented at this school involved in agricultural-oriented occupations. The residential and industrial growth in this southern end of the county has remained fairly stable during the past years. The numbers of children enrolled in the elemtary and middle schools located in these very different ends of the county are shown in Table 1.

Data complied by the school system also indicated that The socioeconomic mix in these school systems were very different. For example, of the total enrollment of children in the five elementary schools in the southern end of the county, 1050 or (48%) of the students qualified for free or reduced lunch during the 1989-90 school year. In contrast, 632 or (30%) of those in the four elementary schools at the northern end of the county qualified for free or reduced lunch. Previous research has also

indicated that the extent and nature of parental involvement in the schools was also different between the northern and southern schools. Previous research had also shown that student scores in reading and mathematics were also much different for students in the northern and southern ends of the county, with students at the southern end scoring lower on standardized testing instruments.

Table 1. Distribution of students enrolled in the Washington County Schools for the 1989-90 school year

| School | Grades | Number | % of Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Southern Portion of the County** | | | |
| Asbury Elementary School | K-6 | 169 | 3.2 |
| Jonesborough Elementary School | K-4 | 758 | 14.2 |
| Jonesborough Middle School | 5-8 | 639 | 11.9 |
| Lamar Elementary School | K-8 | 541 | 10.1 |
| South Central Elementary School | K-8 | 227 | 4.2 |
| West View Elementary School | K-8 | 496 | 9.2 |
| **Northern Portion of the County** | | | |
| Boones Creek Elementary School | K-4 | 513 | 9.6 |
| Boones Creek Middle School | 5-8 | 415 | 7.8 |
| Fall Branch Elementary School | K-8 | 239 | 4.5 |
| Gray Elementary School | K-8 | 830 | 15.5 |
| Sulphur Springs Elementary | K-8 | 524 | 9.8 |
| TOTAL | | 5351 | 100.0 |

A review of the research comparing schools at the northern and southern ends of Washington County led educators to the conclusion that family involvement was lower in the communities with lower socioeconomic status, the greatest degree of parental involvement in the schools occurred at grades K-4, student from lower socioeconomic backgrounds tended to come from the southern end of the county. In addition, school officials reviewed the current literature which indicated the importance of involving family members in the educational process of their child. The result of this information lead to the development of the LIFE (Learning Is For Everyone) Program which was instituted during the Fall, 1989 in the Washington County Schools.

The LIFE (Learning Is For Everyone) Program for 1989-90 was an extension of a previous family/community involvement program that was developed by the Washington County Schools in response to a need to increase family and community involvement in the schools. The initial program, entitled PASS (Parents Assisting Student Success) had served as a state model for family/community

involvement since its inception in 1986. The initial focus of the PASS program was to increase the level of family involvement in the schools by developing an organized system whereby parents could volunteer to work in the schools.

While the PASS program had been very successful in encouraging parent participation in the schools, in 1989 it was recognized that more needed to be done to encourage parents to become involved in the education of their children in the system. Based on an analysis of achievement test data, PASS participation patterns and the socioeconomic mix present in the existing schools within the county, it became clear to school officials that there were inequities between schools in the northern and southern ends of the county.

The data that were collected on the different schools indicated a need to increase the academic achievement of those children residing in the southern end of the county. In particular, students in Asbury, West View, Lamar and South Central Elementary schools were targeted for the new program. This program was accomplished through a modification in the PASS program. This modification of the PASS program involved the introduction of family learning activities and parenting courses into the communities by individuals from those communities. A Family Involvement Specialist and School Social Worker reached out to the families through home visits and neighborhood site demonstrations of learning activities available in mobile learning centers. Activities in these "community schools" were presented as family-centered enrichment activities, in order to dispel negative attitudes toward education and the educational process. Incentives and recognition systems were introduced to provide immediate rewards for family involvement in the child's educational program. The real intent of the modification of the PASS program was to incorporate a more comprehensive program of parental involvement into the schools by increasing the number of home/family activities and parenting courses available through the original PASS program.

The primary focus of the new LIFE program for the 1989-90 school years was on students in grades K-2 in the targeted schools at the southern end of the county. These grades were initially targeted because involvement at these levels is traditionally higher than at other levels. While students in the northern end of the county continued with the traditional PASS program, those in the southern end of the county benefitted from PASS in addition to a number of other programs specifically designed to increase the level of family involvement in the school.

The goal of the program was to directly affect the establishment of a positive attitude toward education. Through the outreach effort parents were encouraged to vocalize and

visualize educational expectations for their children. Training for educational personnel was designed to familiarize them with the interrelationship between family issues and educational attainment. The long-range goal was to help family members understand that their own educational experience could be enhanced through the continued learning of skills regardless of age. By training parents to enhance their childrens' education through home learning activities and through the application of research based techniques in parenting and behavior management, the project empowered families with the instructional knowledge and techniques to provide students the opportunity to reach their academic potential. The modification of the original PASS program reinforced the concept that an effective family involvement program must assess the needs of the families they are to serve and adapt to meet their needs.

B. Goals of the Program

The following series of goals and objectives were used to guide the LIFE program for the 1989-90 School year.

**GOAL #1: To develop attitudes and understandings that would enable families to become effective partners with their school in the education of their children.**

Objective 1: Continue to train, place and coordinate the educational volunteers in the schools (PASS program).

Objective 2: Provide seminars and awareness activities on child development.

Objective #3: Provide family centered activities at the community schools and in neighborhood sites.

Objective #4: Conduct home visits to children enrolled at the target schools.

Objective #5: Organize and coordinate family educational support groups in the targeted schools.

**GOAL #2: To develop techniques and practices necessary for effective parenting, capitalizing on the time spent at home.**

Objective #1: Implement the Bowdoin Parent Education Program for all parents of Kindergarten Students.

Objective #2: Present the Family Math Program for parents of primary grade children.

Objective #3: Present the Family Focus Newspapers in education program in conjunction with the Johnson City Press.

Objective #4: Maintain and coordinate Center for Educational Home Learning Materials.

Objective #5: Operate a Mobile Learning Center in the communities targeted.

GOAL #3: To reduce significantly the expenses and energies now directed towards remedial and special education programs by means of a program directed at prevention.

Objective #1: Coordinate a comprehensive screening of pre-registered kindergarten students at all schools.

Objective 2: Supervise a summer program for pre-kindergarten students "at-risk".

Objective #3: Supervise a summer program for pre-first grade students which focusses on the maintenance of skill development.

Objective 4: Coordinate the provision of health or social services for families of at the targeted schools and qualifying students.

GOAL #4: To provide for the healthy working relationships between parents and schools.

Objective #1: Provide training for Chapter One and special education personnel on working effectively with families.

Objective #2: Provide training for educational personnel on family related issues.

Objective #3: Provide recognition and incentives to family participants at the target schools.

Objective #4: Disseminate information to new parents in Washington County on child development.

C. Participants in the Programs

Participants in the program were composed of parents in the elementary schools in Washington County, Tennessee that voluntarily participated in the programs, children who participated in the various programs and the teachers who engaged

in professional development activities associated with the different programs in the LIFE project.

D. Analysis of Program Components

There were a number of different aspects to the 1989-1990 LIFE Program. The Bowdoin Parent Education Program provided parents with information to make them more effective as teachers at home. The Family Math Program provided information which also helped parents become more effective in teaching basic math skills at home. Parent Training Seminars were offered to help parents understand how to work most effectively with their children. Teacher Training Workshops were conducted to help early childhood, special education and Chapter I teachers determine how to work more effectively with parents. The Pre-Kindergarten Screening Program was used to identify students "at-risk" for failure in kindergarten, while the Summer Enrichment Program was developed to help those youngsters identified as "at-risk" to develop the skills necessary to function in kindergarten and first grade. The social services and health services were also provided to create a link between the home, school and wider community. Each of these programs is described in more detail under each appropriate analysis section.

## II. DESCRIPTION OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

A. Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation was to validate the effectiveness of the LIFE program. By design, the evaluation focused on the broad goals and specific objectives. The intent, however, was not simply to determine whether an objective had been met, but to provide a multifaceted description of the program through the eyes of the participants. To this end a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods were utilized.

B. Evaluation Design and Measurement Procedures

The evaluation design was ex post facto in nature, in that much of the information about attitudes, beliefs and understandings were collected after the programs were completed. Such a design makes it difficult to infer cause and effect relationships. This type of design does provide, however, for a rich description of program detail. Where appropriate, statistical procedures were used to make inferences regarding differences between groups, in a manner that approximates the analysis one would perform in an experimental situation.

Data were generally collected by questionnaires and inventories that were specifically developed to measure attitudes and understandings of parents, teachers, and students. Many of

these inventories are contained in Appendices A-G. These instruments are developed specifically for this evaluation process. The LIFE Program Assessment Form was used in all programs to assess participants attitudes toward the program. The Parent Expectations Assessment Form (PEAF) was designed to assess the type of expectations parents held regarding their child's education. The Parent Orientation to Learning Inventory (POLI) measures how positive an adult views learning and the opportunity for education. The Student Orientation to Learning Inventory (SOLI) was designed to measure students' attitudes toward education and learning. The Home Involvement Inventory was used to determine how much time parents spent teaching their children at home through various activities. The Teacher Workshop Evaluation Form and the Teacher Self-Assessment were designed to provide information on the quality of and outcome of the teacher training session. The Bowdoin Method: Inventory of Parent Beliefs and the Brigance K-1 Basic Screening Assessment are copyrighted materials and were not included in the appendix materials. Brief open-ended interviews were used to uncover personal feelings about the various programs. Archival records were also used to obtain data for the analysis.

### C. Evaluators

The evaluation was conducted by Dr. Russell F. West, Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis at East Tennessee State University. At different times, the principal evaluator was assisted by Mr. Pete Cummins, Ms. Cheryl Rhoton and Ms. Xioaping Wang.

## III. RESULTS

The results of the evaluation are presented as a series of responses to each of the programs on the pages that follow. For each program, a brief background statement is provided, the purpose is described, specific program procedures are highlighted and program specific activities are discussed. The program assessment procedures are then presented, one-at-a-time, along with results and a brief discussion. Each program segment ends with a brief program summary which highlights the major findings.

# BOWDOIN PARENT EDUCATION PROGRAM

## Background and Purpose of the Program

The Bowdoin Parent Education Program is a self-contained teaching system that imparts the knowledge parents need to help their children develop proper skills and attitudes toward learning. The program was designed in the 1960's by Ruth Bowdoin, who felt that something needed to be done to reduce the growing number of children with learning problems who were entering the schools. She therefore developed this set of curriculum materials that were designed tho involve the parent, at home, with the child. The materials are not filled with educational jargon and institutional language, but are written simply, directly and clearly to parents. The Bowdoin Program was selected for national dissemination by the U.S. Office of Education and has won the prestigious Educational Pacesetter Award. The Bowdoin Program is designed for use by many different "teachers" of children, including parents, teachers, day care workers, school volunteers, babysitters and others. The program consists of ten different books which focus on different topics. These books are listed below along with statements summarizing the major emphasis in each.

**Book 1: Parents are Teachers**
Provides forty-four lessons for the child 2-6, using common household objects. The lesson emphasizes language and concept development aimed at successful reading. Parents are told clearly why each lesson is taught, what is needed and how to be most effective.

**Book 2: Thousands and Thousands of Words**
Suggests specific ways for helping parents develop a child's vocabulary. Explains why this is so important in learning to read. Most effective for ages 2-8.

**Book 3: How Your Child Learns**
Emphasizes the many ways in which children age 2-8 learn. Parents are shown how to provide learning experiences.

**Book 4: Words that Win Children**
Offers useful Words to use in building positive feelings in a child age 2-8. "Don't say" and "Do say" words are given to parents and reasons why are explained simply.

**Book 5: Instead of Nagging (Happier Child. Happier Parent)**
Presents ways of managing children ages 2-8 in order to develop positive feelings and feel more full functioning. Simple effective suggestions are given.

**Book 6: The Importance of Good Feelings (And How to Give Them to Your Child)**
Identifies specific ways in which parents may help children ages 2-6 develop a good self-concept.



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**Book 7: How Things Look**
A fun book enabling parents to teach the child age 3-6 shapes, colors, body parts, numbers and letters. Inspires creative thinking while developing vocabulary.

**Book 8: Getting Ready for Reading**
Suggests fun lessons for developing visual, auditory, category and sequential abilities in children ages 3-6 bringing them to the threshold of reading.

**Book 9: Help Your Child Read Better**
This lesson was designed for the child age 6-8 whose parent wants to help and wishes to do the right thing.

**Book 10: My Mommy Likes Me**
Describes a child's 8 basic needs to develop and succeed in school or in life. A description of how the parent can help supply them.

This parent education program gives those working in the schools suggestions for actually involving parents in the training program, which is very "activity oriented". The program is based on a series of parent training sessions that cover key affective and cognitive parent education concepts. All parents get a personal copy of each session workbook. The books, which are used as a study guide during the session, are then taken home for use. The books offer a variety of suggestions for using materials around the house and neighborhood to develop important learning concepts. Child care was provided by the school while the parents attended the Bowdoin Program. The parent training is further extended by the availability of a Kindergarten Lending Library in which parents could check out a variety of educational games and materials. The cost of the program was approximately $3.00 per contact hour.

## Specific Activities

Most of the Bowdoin Program was conducted by two Career Level III Kindergarten teachers from the Washington County School System who were hired specifically to teach in the program. One individual from the central office taught the class at Asbury School. The sessions were conducted at five different locations in the county. The times and locations for these programs are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Locations, Times and Characteristics of the Bowdoin Programs Offered By the Washington County School System for the 1989-90 School Year

| Location | Months | Sessions | Length |
|---|---|---|---|
| Boones Creek Elementary | January-February | 5 | 2 1/2 hours |
| Jonesborough Elementary | January-February | 5 | 2 1/2 hours |
| Asbury Elementary | February-March | 5 | 2 hours |
| Lamar Elementary | April-May | 5 | 2 hours |
| West View Elementary | April-May | 5 | 2 hours |

At most of the schools, the program was offered in the evening, although at both Jonesborough and Boones Creek a Saturday Session was held. The sessions at Asbury School were held on Saturday. The programs were offered in the evenings during the week. The final two sessions at the West View and Lamar Schools were combined into one class.

Activities Initiated

There were usually two of the Bowdoin lessons covered in each week of the program. Parents would take the books home to read and study. Classroom activities were very "hands-on" and reinforced the materials and activities covered in the books. The sessions usually began with a brief discussion of previous information. The coordinators then would ask participants to engage in a number of individual and group activities that would highlight important concepts. The groups would then reflect on these activities and draw inferences for improved parenting. The sessions and activities were based on many of the principles that undergird effective adult education practice. The final session consisted of a "celebration" in which participants shared food, celebrated accomplishments, listened to a speaker on the topic of parent/child relationships and received awards. Much of the summative evaluation material was collected at this last session.

## PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Program assessment was conducted in several ways. Number of parents participants and contact hours were considered as one measure of program success. The amount of usage in the lending libraries was another measure of success. Parents were also asked to complete a questionnaire entitled "The Bowdoin Method: Inventory of Parent Beliefs and Practices". This was completed both at the beginning of the program and at the end to determine of parent attitudes and beliefs had changed. Parents were also asked to complete the LIFE Parent Assessment Form, the Home Involvement Inventory and the Parent Orientation to Learning

Inventory at the Lamar and West View locations. Finally, telephone interviews were conducted with 28 participants after the program had ended to determine their feelings about the program's strengths and weaknesses.

## Parent Participation in the Program

At all five of the sites there were a total of forty-seven parent participants in the Bowdoin Program. This amounted to a total of 587 1/2 hours of parent contact at the sites. The following represents an approximate breakdown of the number of participants, by school; 15 at Lamar and West View Elementary Schools, 18 at Boones Creek Elementary School, 5 at Asbury School, and 7 at Jonesborough Elementary School (2 were unclassified). The numbers are approximate since parents frequently switched to another location to catch-up on a session they might have missed at their place of regular attendance.

## Utilization of Lending Libraries

An examination of the weekly records of materials utilization revealed that parents checked out a significant amount of material from the Bowdoin Lending Libraries at the different schools. A total of 117 parents checked materials out of the libraries. This was many more than actually attended the Bowdoin Sessions and indicated that the lending library was an important component of the LIFE program, even beyond its association with the Bowdoin Parent Education Program. This level of utilization was in addition to other educational materials checked out of the regular school libraries.

## Change In Scores on the Bowdoin Method: Inventory of Parent Beliefs and Practices

The questionnaire entitled "The Bowdoin Method: Inventory of Parent Beliefs and Practices" was administered to participants at the first session and again during the last session. This inventory was designed to assess the extent to which parents shared the beliefs and understandings that are advocated in the Bowdoin Program. Pre to Post-Assessments with the inventory give an indication of the extent to which change occurred in the entire group as a result of the program. Ideally, pre to post-program change should have been examined by individuals. The assessment was completed in such a way that it was not possible to pair a participant's pre and post-program score. To compare the group results, however, a z-test for two independent proportions was conducted to determine if the percentage of correct responses on the pre-assessment was significantly higher than on the post-assessment. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Comparison of Pre-Assessment and Post-Assessment Scores on the Bowdoin Method: Inventory of Parent Beliefs and Practices

| | n* | Mean | StdDev | Percent of Total | z-value | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pre-Assessment | 54 | 36.46 | 9.37 | 73% | 1.57 | .058 |
| Post-Assessment | 44 | 42.77 | 3.53 | 86% | | |

*n=number actually completing the survey at each administration

As shown in the table, the number of correct responses on the 50 item instrument increased from a mean of 36.46 to a mean of 42.77. This represented a percentage increase from 73% to 86%. The probability of obtaining a difference this large just due to chance factors was less than six percent. It appears that parents increased their understanding as a result of participating in the Bowdoin Program.

Life Parent Assessment Form

The LIFE Program Assessment form was given to all who attended the final sessions of the Bowdoin Programs. The results of the program were very positive. The following represent summary statements derived from responses given in the assessment. The written comments were from the parents who participated at Lamar and West View Schools. Their comments, however, are representative of the entire group of Bowdoin participants. The complete results of the assessment are given in Appendix I. The actual number responding to the Likert-type items reflect all Bowdoin Participants, while the written comments are from the two specific schools.

Question #1: What did you like about the program ?

The participants from Lamar and West View Schools felt very strongly that the entire program was valuable. Their comments were extremely positive as shown by such comments as "It was a wonderful experience" and "I enjoyed all the classes. If there were more I would attend. I have learned a lot".

Question #2: What didn't you like about the program ?

From the Lamar and West View group there were only four responses to this question in which participants made critical comments. Three of those comments centered around not having enough time to spend on the material. The participants wanted additional information spend on some of the subjects.

Question #3: Did this program cooperate or compete with other school activities? In what ways did it cooperate or compete?

There were no clear responses indicating that the Bowdoin Program competed with any other school activities. There were only three responses to this question from the Lamar and West View participants.

Question #4: In what ways was the program helpful?

A variety of comments were given in response to this item. Several of the responses showed that parents gained a new understanding of their children. For example, one parent noted that the program helped her develop "cooperation and thoughtfulness toward my child [and helped her] understand his point of view as well as mine" while another felt the program "makes you more aware of how you can help your child".

Question #5: Because of this program, I have become more involved in my child's education.

Parents generally strongly agreed with this statement (see results below). Perhaps one parent summed up many of the responses to this question by stating that "I learn't we can solve problems together and do work together". Parent participants appeared to be more involved in the education of their children.

| Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| 31 | 16 | 0 | 0 |

Question #6: Because of this program, I feel better about the school.

Most of the parents agreed with this statement. The program did appear to help parents develop healthy attitudes toward the school. For example, one parent noted that she felt very positive because "it (the school) cares enough to have this to help us and our children".

| Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| 20 | 26 | 1 | 1 |

Question #7: Because of this program, my child's skills have improved.

Parents were in general agreement with this statement, although only three written comments were obtained from the Lamar and West View parents.

| Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | 32 | 1 | 0 |

**Question #8: Because of this program, my child's attitude has improved.**

The program had a very positive effect on the attitudes of the children, according to the responses of the parent participants.

| Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | 36 | 0 | 0 |

**Question #9: Because of this program, my child's behavior has improved.**

There was a general agreement that the program did help to improve the behavior of the children, although few examples were given by the participants at Lamar and West View schools.

| Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 37 | 1 | 0 |

**Question #10: Because of this program, I am better able to help my child.**

The parent participants felt strongly that they were better able to help their children after participating in the program.

| Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| 26 | 22 | 0 | 0 |

**Question #11: I would recommend this program to other parents.**

The parent participants were very enthusiastic about the program. Most strongly agreed that they would recommend the Bowdoin program to other parents. Comments such as the following were made by the parents at Lamar and West View; "It is very much fun and educational" or "It is fantastic".

| Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| 40 | 8 | 0 | 0 |

**Additional Comments:**

The survey instrument allowed for additional comments following the main portion of the questionnaire. All of the comments were very positive and expressed a desire for more programs of a similar nature. One representative from the Lamar and West View group expressed it this way; "I think a class like this should be offered for every class level of school to help us along".

**Parent Expectations Assessment Form (PEAF)**

The PEAF was developed to gather information regarding parental expectations of their children. The PEAF was administered to program participants at the conclusion of the program. The PEAF was designed to measure the extent to which parents had positive educational expectations for their children. The scale values ranged from a high of 5 (Strongly Agree) to a low of 1 (Strongly Disagree). The mean or average scores on each of the items are presented in Table 4, along with ranks. The results of this assessment indicate that parents held very positive educational expectations for their children at the end of the Bowdoin Program. Respondents had high mean values on nearly all the positively worded items. The respondents did disagree with the statements that "While it would be nice, it is not important that my child graduates from high school" (Mean = 1.3), "My child will probably drop out of school before he or she graduates" (Mean=1.5) and that "It is not that important that my child stays in school until he or she graduates" (Mean = 1.5). Item 5 "School will provide the knowledge and skills necessary to obtain a job" indicated the greatest level of uncertainty (mean = 3.9). All of the responses to the scale are compiled and provided in Table 4 for participants in the Lamar and West View Programs.

The PEAF included two final questions which provided parents with opportunities to make some brief comments. The complete set or comments are given in Appendix H.

**Question #11: Please take a few minutes and describe what educational goals you have for your child.**

A number of the parents indicated a desire for their children to attend college someday. For example, one parent stated that "I would love to see my children graduate from high school and college--to find an interesting job". A number of other responses reflected a parental desire for their children to enjoy learning, go as far as they can and find an occupation they enjoy. This sentiment is best summed up in the following quote; "I would like for my child to go as far as she can. I have told her that she can be and do anything she wants in life and that in order to do this she needs a good education".

**Question #12: Has your participation in this program changed the expectations that you have for your child's education? If so, how have the expectations changed?**

While none of the parents indicated that their expectations had changed dramatically as a result of the program, several did come to new understandings about their children. Many of the parents already had high expectations for their children prior to the Bowdoin Program. One representative parent expressed it this

way "it has not changed my expectations. They still remain the same". One of those parents with high expectations noted that "My expectations have not changed, but now I realize that I can help her at a very early age be more prepared to start school".

It appears that many of those who participated in the Bowdoin Program were not the parents of children who were "at-risk". Rather, many of these parents were those already holding high expectations for their children. The program certainly did not diminish those expectations, as they remained strong.

Table 4. Summary of Parent Responses to the Parent Expectations Assessment Form (PEAF) At the Conclusion of the Bowdoin Program at Lamar and West View Schools (n=8)

| | ITEM | MEAN | RANK |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | I believe that my child will enjoy school until he or she graduates. | 4.1 | 4.5 |
| 2. | My child will succeed in school. | 4.3 | 3.0 |
| 3. | My child will be a good student throughout his or her school years. | 4.0 | 6.0 |
| 4. | My child will probably drop out of school before he or she graduates. | 1.5 | 8.5 |
| 5. | School will provide the knowledge and skills necessary to obtain a job. | 3.9 | 7.0 |
| 6. | My child should stay in school for as long as possible. | 4.5 | 1.5 |
| 7. | It is not important that my child stays in school until he or she graduates. | 1.5 | 8.5 |
| 8. | My child will one day attend a college or university. | 4.1 | 4.5 |
| 9. | Our family encourages my child to go as far as he or she can in school. | 4.5 | 1.5 |
| 10. | While it would be nice, it is not that important that my child graduate from high school. | 1.3 | 10.0 |

## Parent Orientation to Learning Inventory

The Parent Orientation to Learning Inventory was given during the last session of the Bowdoin Program at Lamar and West View Schools. Twenty participants in the Bowdoin Program from other locations were also asked to complete the form. This questionnaire was designed to gather information on parental perceptions of learning and education. All items received a positive response on the questionnaire. Parents expressed their strong agreement in two areas: "Learning is enjoyable" (mean = 4.8) and "Education should play a big part in any child's future" (mean = 4.8). This demonstrates the high degree of value which parents place on education for their children. Item 5, "I know when I need to learn new things" (mean = 3.7) received the smallest amount of support while Item 13, "Public schools are doing a good job of preparing kids for the future" (mean = 3.8) also received a low priority among participants. All the responses to the questionnaire have been compiled and are reported in Table 5.

A comparison group was assembled of twenty parents who were attending a school function but were not participating in the LIFE Program activities. These individuals were asked to complete the POLI. A comparison was then made between the percentage of Strongly Agree responses made by participants, as opposed to nonparticipants. A z-test for independent proportions was used to determine if the responses on the POLI were more positive in the participant group (n=480 responses) than the group of twenty nonparticipants selected during March, 1990 (n=300 responses). The results revealed that the participants had a higher percentage of students rating the items as "Strongly Agree" (51% versus 28%). The results were statistically significant ($z=6.59$, $p < .001$), indicating that the participants had a more positive orientation to learning, as measured on the POLI.

These results indicate that parents in the Bowdoin Program did hold more positive orientations to learning than a nonparticipating comparison group, as measured on the POLI. Although these results did not provide evidence that participation in the Bowdoin Program caused these parents to have more positive attitudes, it does highlight the strong relationship between participation and attitude.

Table 5. Summary of Bowdoin Participant Responses to the Parent Orientation to Learning Inventory (n=32)

| | ITEM | MEAN | RANK |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | I really like to learn new things. | 4.7 | 4.5 |
| 2. | Learning is enjoyable. | 4.8 | 1.5 |
| 3. | I am good at learning. | 4.1 | 12.0 |
| 4. | It is important that a child goes as far as he or she can in school. | 4.7 | 5.5 |
| 5. | I know when I need to learn new things. | 3.7 | 15.0 |
| 6. | Education should play a big part in any child's future. | 4.8 | 1.5 |
| 7. | It is important that people learn how to be effective learners. | 4.7 | 4.5 |
| 8. | I love to learn new things. | 4.6 | 7.0 |
| 9. | I like to talk about new ideas. | 4.5 | 8.0 |
| 10. | Every year I learn several new things on my own. | 4.1 | 12.0 |
| 11. | I have a lot of natural curiosity. | 4.4 | 9.0 |
| 12. | I enjoy reading. | 4.7 | 4.5 |
| 13. | Public schools are doing a good job of preparing kids for the future. | 3.8 | 14.0 |
| 14. | It is exciting to be at school. | 4.2 | 10.0 |
| 15. | School is the center of learning for the community. | 4.1 | 12.0 |

## Home Involvement Inventory

Parents were also asked to complete a Home Involvement Inventory which was designed to obtain estimates of how much time parents were spending at home with their children in educational activities. A number of different activities with the potential for providing educational experiences were listed on the inventory. These are presented in Table 6.

As shown in the table, parents spent the greatest amount of "educational time" with their children while listening and responding to their children's stories (Mean=8.9). Parents also spend a significant amount of time playing number games (Mean=5.6) and watching TV and discussing (Mean=5.2). Parents spent much less time discussing current events (Mean=2.5).

Several open-ended questions were included on the Home Involvement Inventory to assess the extent to which parents worked at home with their children. A summary of the comments is presented below while the entire list of comments may be found in Appendix J.

1. List things you do at home to stimulate your child's language skills. How much time do you spend.

Many different strategies were listed by the parents. Several of the respondents noted that they often help their children by sounding out words and helping the children break them down. Several others reported that they read outloud to their children. Word games were also listed as an important strategy.

2. List things you do at home to help your child understand elementary math concepts.

The primary strategy for teaching counting skills was to engage the child in counting familiar household objects or people. This was mentioned by most of those who responded to this item.

3. List things you do at home to help your child be better prepared to function in school. How much time do you spend?

Many of the respondents to this item stressed the importance of good communication between parent and child. Parents also saw the importance of making sure the children have an adequate amount of sleep and proper nutrition. One parent described her role as making "sure she gets plenty of rest, has a good breakfast before school. [We also] talk about the daily activities". A number of the parents sighted the importance of talking with the children about daily activities.

Table 5. Mean Number of Hours (Per Week) Parents Spent in Educational Activities at Home With Their Children During the Bowdoin Program (Parents from Lamar and West View Programs (n=10)

| Type of Activity | Mean | Rank |
|---|---|---|
| Read aloud to Child | 4.5 | 4 |
| Listen to Child's Stories | 8.9 | 1 |
| Discuss Current Events | 2.5 | 10 |
| Tell Stories From Pictures | 2.8 | 8 |
| Work to Say Words Correctly | 3.2 | 7 |
| Watch TV and Discuss | 5.2 | 3 |
| Play Number Games | 5.6 | 2 |
| Count Objects | 3.7 | 5 |
| Discuss Shapes and Sizes | 3.6 | 6 |
| Work on Math or Language Problems | 2.7 | 9 |

**Weekly Evaluations of Bowdoin Sessions**

Instructors in the Bowdoin Program maintained weekly evaluation records which provided formative evaluation information to be used in making weekly adjustments in activities. The evaluation form used during one week and a set of responses to the form are attached in Appendix K. A review of a sample of weekly evaluation materials indicated that the evaluation form was non-threatening to participants and provided the instructors with appropriate feedback for improving the course on a week-to-week basis. The sample of weekly evaluations appeared to be completed thoughtfully and were very positive. They reflected the highly positive responses of parents not only to the Bowdoin Program, but to the work of the instructors, as well. They reflect a positive relationship between instructors and students, a genuine interest in the material and an enjoyable teaching/learning situation.

## Follow-up Interviews With Bowdoin Program Participants

During the summer, 1990, telephone interviews were held with 28 parents who participated in the Bowdoin program. The purpose of these interviews was to obtain a retrospective look at the program and to determine what outcomes parents felt came from the program. The participants responded to three questions; 1) Which Program did you attend 2) Has there been anything in particular that has happened since the program that you would say is a result of the program ? 3) If you were a radio advertiser and you were doing a commercial for this program and trying to get more people to attend it next year, what would you say about it ? Although only three questions were asked, additional probes were used to elicit more detailed information.

Every parent interviewed was very positive about the Bowdoin Program. They described the program as being excellent and many mentioned that they would highly recommend the program to other parents. Some of the parents were very general in their feelings about the program and its impact. For example, one parent exclaimed that "it helped me to maybe understand him [son] a little bit better and the books and things and spend a little bit more time with him, you know, doing the activities and things like that. But, nothing really specific that I can really pinpoint". Another reported this same type of general positive feeling when she said "it helped me a lot, just, I can't really pinpoint anything, just, uh, how to help them learn with things that you do daily". Finally, another parent described her reaction this way; "I would just say that every parent should have the chance to go through, that it is very helpful. I mean there is nothing any better around to help you deal with your children's problems and help them get ready for school. And it's just good all the way around, everything about it !".

Other parents listed specific outcomes of the program that they felt were very useful. Many highly positive statements emerged from the interviews, but only a few will be used to illustrate the major themes. A number of the parents felt that the program had helped them really look critically at their own parenting behavior, particularly in terms of communicating with their children. Parents mentioned that they became much more aware of their "nagging" and ineffective communication with their children. This reflection appeared to lead to behavioral change. As an example, one parent reported that "Well now, instead of nagging, [I have learned] to talk to them and everything. That really stuck with me because I was really bad for that. I felt down right guilty too". Another summed up the importance of critical reflection when she said "It [the program] makes us stop to see, you know, this is the one thing that the program does best, to stop and see what I am doing when I am starting to talk to my child". Another described this focus on better communication this way "We just have been making some attempts to

change our ways of treating our children, you know. I have twin boys, [boys names], and they will be seven years old next week, and we have been just trying to do a better job of communicating, and not, uh, I don't know, following some of the rules or the plans , you might say, programs, that the Bowdoin Method showed us. And it has been very helpful I think". The interviews contained numerous references to ways in which parents were working to change they way in which they communicated with their children.

Several parents also felt that their childrens' academic performance had improved as a result of the program. One of these parents described the program to grades linkage as follows; "It was helpful to the grades. I was helping him a lot during that period of time, and like right after, and he went up from, like twenty--something in his class to, like, in the top ten. So [this continued] until, you know, I couldn't work with him as much again". Another parent identified a link between participation in the program and reading improvement; "There was a big emphasis there on children learning as many words as they could because it would help them read later on, and we never realized how many words a child that small really does know, and we've been aggressively helping them spot new things and learn new words, and we have really noticed that they are making a lot more associations and concepts that way". These parents saw the program as helping them recognize opportunities for working with their children and also felt that this extra time spent resulted in higher performance in school.

Several other parents expressed the opinion that the sessions seemed to serve as a source of self-assurance for them. In some ways, the program took on the function of support group for several of the participants. One woman noted that "I think that I have more patience with him now than I did then. It's good to go, and you realize that other parents are as impatient as you are when you think you're the only one. So I think that is one of the big things".

Many of the parents reported that the most important and long-lasting part of the program was its on emphasis using the home learning environment as a place to teach children. This emphasis on teaching parents how to teach was very strong and came through loudly in the interviews. For example, one parent expressed her positive feeling this way; "It was helpful just by emphasizing the way you can teach your kids so many things just by doing chores, and you know, just different things, you know that I didn't even think of. That was what really impressed me about the program". Another parent was more specific when she stated that "I think that we learned a lot from it [the program]. It helped me to figure out new ways to help him, just like, uh, when we are cooking, letting him count beans, you know, before we start them cooking, you know, just little things like that I have

never thought about before that helped him, you know, as far as learning to count and the colors and separating and everything". Parents cited this emphasis on teaching your child through everyday activities as being a major strength of the Bowdoin Program.

Parents were also very happy with the teaching methods used in the Bowdoin program, because they were very "hands-on" and adhered to principles of effective adult education practice. During the interviews, several people mentioned this activity. This feeling was perhaps best summed up with the following comment; "I think that it gets the parents interested because you are not just lectured to for an hour. It's the involvement, the games and just the general program, uh, activities that I liked about it. It wasn't boring. They made it very fun, involving all the parents, you know, in little activities". Another parent felt that this information should be highlighted in future advertisements since the teaching strategies are so important. According to that parent, "A lot of us parents had talked before we ever attended the first meeting; and some people did not go because they thought it was going to be a lecture. An if you could put forth, you know that this is not lectures, it's hand-on experience, that there's fun and games and open discussion, you know, no lectures. Because I did have some people tell me that they weren't going because it was going to be lectures".

While all of the responses to the program were positive, suggestions for improvement were offered, as well. One dominant theme that ran through many of the interviews was that parents need to know that the program is geared to preschool age. Many parents noted that while they enjoyed the program, it was not really appropriate for their children. These feeling is best summed up with the following quote; "Well now, the program was very interesting and I really enjoyed it. My only regret was my kids were a little older, probably than what we were really working with. My kids are six and eight. I made the statement to some people that I wish I had heard this and been there, you know, three or four years before. But it was a good program and I really did enjoy it". A number of the parents of children ages 5-9 reported that they enjoyed the program, although at times the material was not really appropriate for their situation. Several parents suggested that a follow-up to the Bowdoin Program be offered which focuses on working with the elementary-age child. One also asked for classes dealing with teenagers.

Several parents also suggested that more time be allowed for the Bowdoin Program. This argument was best expressed by a parent who noted "I just loved everything about the program. The only thing was that there didn't seem to be enough time, you know, to really get into it really well. We just didn't have enough time and we kept extending the classes. Everybody would try to come a little bit earlier so we would have more time for

it. But it still didn't seem like we had enough time to go completely through everything".

In terms of future programs, several parents suggested that special attention be given to advertising the program in preschool settings, where the program might be most appropriate. The parents noted that it is not generally very effective to send brochures home with children and that the school system advertise the program on television, in newspapers and by word of mouth at local day care centers. The interviews provided a picture of a very useful program that continues to have an impact on the lives of those who participated.

## Program Summary

The Bowdoin Program was a highly successful parent education program that lead to specific changes in parenting behaviors. The program fostered more effective communication between parents and their children, helped parents become more effective learning partners with their children, lead to the development of better academic skills and served as a source of parental growth and support. The staff made the program a highly effective adult learning experience through the use of multiple teaching strategies. While future programs should continue to attract parents of preschool age children, the school system should consider offering parent education programs that might be of more direct benefit to older elementary age children.

# FAMILY MATH PROGRAM

## Background and Purpose of the Program

The Family Math Program was implemented as part of the 1989-90 LIFE program in a effort to provide a setting where parents and children could learn mathematics together. The Family Math program was developed at the Lawrence Hall of Science at the University of California-Berkeley as part of the EQUALS program. The program was developed as a result of parental expressions of frustration in not knowing enough about their children's math programs and not understanding the mathematics that their children were studying. Consequently, parents were not able to work with their young students in learning about mathematics.

The Family Mathematics Program is designed to provide a learning environment that is supportive and positive. A "hands-on" approach is used to study mathematical topics such as arithmetic, geometry, probability and statistics, measurement, functions and relations, the use of calculators. The program emphasizes the development of critical thinking skills. Parents and children work together and through structured activities learn to apply the mathematics concepts to their daily lives. The goals of the Family Math Program are to:

1) help students feel more confident and successful about doing math.
2) increase parents' understanding of how they can help their child learn.
3) encourage teachers in making parents part of the educational team.
4) promote positive attitudes toward school among students and teachers.
5) help parents understand how important mathematics is for study and for work.

## Specific Activities

Two Family Math Programs were offered in the Washington County Schools during the 1989-90 school year. Asbury Elementary and West View Elementary were the two sites chosen to conduct the programs. Each program met for six sessions with each session lasting approximately one hour. The first 30 minutes of each class typically consisted of whole group exercises conducted by the teacher and involving both parents and their children. The remaining time was spent in whole group activities that reinforced topics previously learned and strongly encouraged parent-child interaction. Material that was covered during the sessions included arithmetic, geometry, probability and statistics, measurement, functions and relations, and the use of calculators.

## Activities Initiated

Two Family Math classes were conducted in the Washington County Schools during the 1989-90 school year. The Instructor for all of the sessions was Dr. Christine Ejlali, Supervisor for Curriculum and project Director for the LIFE program. The first session was held at Asbury Elementary and began on Monday evening April 16, 1990 from 5:00 - 6:00 p.m. The first session for West View Elementary School met the following Saturday afternoon April 21, 1990 from 1:30 - 2:30 p.m. The final session for Asbury was conducted at Jonesborough Elementary on Monday evening May 7, 1990. The final evaluations were, therefore, completed at Jonesborough. Extra time was allotted at the end of this session to provide opportunity for assessment of the program. The final session for West View Elementary was Saturday afternoon May 19, 1990. Likewise, time was allotted at the end of this session to evaluate the program. Shortly after the last sessions, telephone interviews were conducted with each parent participant in order to provide additional data.

## Other Relevant Information

The Family Math Program was composed of 12 family teams (child (K-2) and parent/guardian) between the two sites. There were 7 family teams at Asbury and 5 family teams at West View. Typically the parent present was the mother but a few fathers participated. On several occasions older or younger siblings were present during the session but did not seem to significantly impact the program positively or negatively. The majority of family teams attended every session occasionally, however, a family team missed a session. Every child received a Family Math tee shirt at the end of the last session.

# PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

## Life Program Assessment Form

The LIFE Program Assessment form was given to participants in the West View and Jonesborough Family Math classes during the last official class session. In general the results of the assessment were very positive. The entire list of comments are given in Appendix M. The following represent summary statements derived from responses to each of the questions on the assessment form:

**Question #1: What did you like about the program ?**

One of the most obvious benefits of the program related to the fact that it gave parents an opportunity to work together with their child. It seemed to provide a forum in which parent and child were able to explore math concepts as a team and have a good time doing it. This benefit was summed up best by a parent

who noted that "I have enjoyed just having this time to spend with my son and learning about math myself". Another expressed this feeling this way; "It was a chance for me to work with [child's name] alone and share math activities that were fun".

A second very positive feature of the program was the opportunity to learn in an enjoyable way. Many of the respondents noted that the sessions were fun and filled with hands-on activities that made students and parents eager to learn. Several representative comments related to this theme are presented as follows; "I enjoyed the small classes, it was more personal and the games the children played to learn the material was interesting for me as well as [child's name]" or "They learned how to put objects with numbers and using numbers how that can be fun in games and still learn".

A third benefit was the amount skill-building that occurred in the sessions. A one parent expressed it, "It introduces new skills to the children and also introduces skills they have had in a new way". These three benefits, parent-child interaction, enjoyment and skill development characterized the respondents feelings about the positive aspects of the program.

**Question #2: What didn't you like about the program ?**

Three respondents indicated that they could find no negative aspects of the program. The dominant negative factor derived from the comments of participants was the brevity of the program. Five of the ten responses to this question somehow reflected a concern that the program was too short and that there was not time to go through all of the materials. One parent noted that "Time was limited so that you didn't have time to go through all of the packages". Another parent suggested that "I would like to see the program lengthened". While small chairs and the time of day were also listed as a negative feature of the program, the major difficulty appeared to be the short time from.

**Question #3: Did this program cooperate or compete with other school activities? In what ways did it cooperate or compete?**

Nearly all of the parents felt that the Family Math activities complemented other activities in the school. Several parents interpreted this question as meaning a complement to other math activities in school. These parents noted that the activities often presented the same information as the children were learning in math class, only from a different perspective. According to one parent "The activities we did were different from school activities but I felt they went hand-in-hand together". Another suggested that the program "went along with math assignments in school but showed fun ways of practicing math". Several other parents addressed the program's complementarity to other school functions and noted that there



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was no conflict with other events.

Question #4: In what ways was the program helpful?

One of the themes that cut across several responses to this question was the fact that the program gave parents an opportunity to learn specific teaching techniques that could be used back home with the child. For example, one parent indicated the program "helped me in seeing easy ways to help my child understand basic geometry concepts". Another reported that the program "gave me some new ideas to help make math fun and we can work on at home". Another helpful feature of the program was it's emphasis on collaborative learning. Several of the parents indicated that their children were able to see that learning could be fun, particularly when it occurred in a friendly group setting.

Question #5: Because of this program, I have become more involved in my child's education.

Out of the twelve respondents, ten felt that they had become more involved in their child's education. Parent's written comments revealed that several felt as though they had already been very involved in their child's educational program and had not really changed a great deal. Others felt that the program had given them new ideas.

| Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 7 | 2 | 0 |

Question #6: Because of this program, I feel better about the school.

Written comments revealed that the parents felt very good about the fact that this program had been offered, although several noted that they had always had good feelings about the school system and that the program had not changed them much.

| Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | 9 | 1 | 0 |

Question #7: Because of this program, my child's skills have improved.

There were a total of five written responses to this time. All five of the responses were positive, although there were no consistent patterns in the responses.

| Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 9 | 0 | 0 |

**Question #8: Because of this program, my child's attitude has improved.**

Four of the eight written responses to this item described a change in attitude. These comments reflected a new interest in math and a more positive attitude. For example one parent reported that "Before the program he had a 'I don't care' attitude. This opened his mind alot to how important it is to try". Four of the respondents reported that their children had good attitudes from the start so little change was noticed.

| Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | 7 | 2 | 0 |

**Question #9: Because of this program, my child's behavior has improved.**

Three of the six written comments reported that no observable behavior changes were evident. The three parents that reported behavior changes indicated that their children had learned to work more cooperatively with other children in a small group setting as a result of the Family Math Program. As one parent put it "he is more able to share and wants to learn and teach his little sister, which is unusual for him".

| Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | 5 | 5 | 0 |

**Question #10: Because of this program, I am better able to help my child.**

Six of the parent participants indicated through written comments that they were better able to help their child at home as a result of participating in the Family Math Program.

| Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 6 | 0 | 0 |

**Question #11: I would recommend this program to other parents.**

All of the respondents felt that they would recommend the program to other parents. One parent expressed her feelings this way; "It means a lot for the child for the parents to make this time for them and it helps parents to learn also". Another parent expressed this sentiment by giving the opinion that "this program would be beneficial to 95% of the parents". Two parents expressed a desire to have more programs like this one in the future and one specifically requested that such a program be conducted with a reading focus.

| Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| 12 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

## Parent Expectations Assessment Form

Parental Expectations Assessment Form (PEAF) was administered to program participants at the conclusion of the program at Jonesborough and West View Schools. The PEAF was designed to measure the extent to which parents had positive educational expectations for their children. The scale values ranged from a high of 5 (Strongly agree) to a low of 1 (strongly disagree). The mean or average scores on each of the items are presented in Table 6, along with ranks. The results of this assessment indicate that parents held very positive educational expectations for their children. On nearly all of the positively worded items, respondents expressed a positive response as reflected in the high mean values. Responses were not quite as positive on the following two positively worded items, "I believe that my child will enjoy school until he or she graduates (Mean=4.2) and "my child will be a good student throughout his or her school years" (Mean=4.2). The respondents did agree with the statement that "My child will probably drop out of school before he or she graduates" (Mean=1.0) or that "It is not important that my child stays in school until he or she graduates" (Mean = 1.0).

To supplement the ratings, respondents were also asked to describe the educational goals that they held for their children. These responses were elicited using the following item; "Please take a few minutes and describe what educational goals you have for your child".

There were many different responses to the item. Several thematic responses did occur, however. First, many of the parents expressed a strong desire that their children go on to college after completing high school. For example, one parent expressed it this way; "I hope that after completing high school my child will want to go to college. College would provide a learning experience along with a chance to be exposed to many things. I would she would find a field of interest and get at least a bachelor's degree". Another was a little more definitive in answering when she stated that "she will complete high school. She will go on to college and on to whatever she needs to do to be the best that she can be". Other respondents expressed a desire that their children be happy and reach their potential, without specifying college. All, however, expressed the desire that their children complete high school. The full set of responses to this item are given in Appendix L.

Table 6. Summary of Parent Responses to the Parent Expectations Assessment Form (PEAF) During the Family Math Program (n=12).

| | ITEM | MEAN | RANK |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | I believe that my child will enjoy school until he or she graduates. | 4.2 | 6.5 |
| 2. | My child will succeed in school. | 4.4 | 4.0 |
| 3. | My child will be a good student throughout his or her school years. | 4.2 | 6.5 |
| 4. | My child will probably drop out of school before he or she graduates. | 1.0 | 9.0 |
| 5. | School will provide the knowledge and skills necessary to obtain a job. | 4.3 | 5.0 |
| 6. | My child should stay in school for as long as possible. | 4.9 | 2.0 |
| 7. | It is not important that my child stays in school until he or she graduates. | 1.0 | 9.0 |
| 8. | My child will one day attend a college or university. | 4.7 | 3.0 |
| 9. | Our family encourages my chid to go as far as he or she can in school. | 5.0 | 1.0 |
| 10. | While it would be nice, it is not that important that my child graduate from high school. | 1.0 | 9.0 |

## Parent Orientations Toward Learning Inventory

The Parent Orientations Toward Learning Inventory was administered to participants in the Family Math Programs at Jonesborough and West View Schools. An examination of these responses also shows that parents had quite positive orientations toward learning. The average scores on each of the POLI items are shown in Table 7. The lowest scores were on the following items; "Public schools are doing a good job of preparing kids for the future" (Mean = 3.9), "It is exciting to be at school" (Mean = 4.2) and "I know when I need to learn new things" (Mean = 4.2).

The scores were highest on the following items; "It is important that a child goes as far as he or she can in school" (Mean = 5.0), "It is important that people learn how to be effective learners" (Mean = 5.0) and "Education should play a big part in any child's future" (Mean = 4.9). While the respondents agreed with all of the items on the form, the importance of education was noted most strongly. It appeared that the items receiving the lowest ratings were those related to confidence in the schools. A z-test for independent proportions was used to determine if the responses on the POLI were more positive in the participant group (n=180 responses) than a group of nonparticipants (n=300 responses) selected during March, 1990. The results revealed that the participants had a higher percentage of students rating the items as "Strongly Agree" (59% versus 28%). The results were statistically significant ($z=6.67$, $p < .001$), indicating that the participants in the program had a more positive orientation to learning, as measured on the POLI.

Table 7. Summary of Parent Responses to the Parent Orientation to Learning Inventory (POLI) During the Family Math Program (n=12)

| | ITEM | MEAN | RANK |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | I really like to learn new things. | 4.7 | 5.5 |
| 2. | Learning is enjoyable. | 4.7 | 5.5 |
| 3. | I am good at learning new things. | 4.3 | 12.0 |
| 4. | It is important that a child goes as far as he or she can in school. | 5.0 | 1.5 |
| 5. | I know when I need to learn new things. | 4.2 | 13.5 |
| 6. | Education should play a big part in any child's future. | 4.9 | 3.0 |
| 7. | It is important that people learn how to be effective learners. | 5.0 | 1.5 |
| 8. | I love to learn new things. | 4.7 | 5.5 |
| 9. | I like to talk about new ideas. | 4.6 | 8.5 |
| 10. | Every year I learn several new things on my own. | 4.6 | 8.5 |
| 11. | I have a lot of natural curiosity. | 4.4 | 11.0 |
| 12. | I enjoy reading. | 4.5 | 10.0 |
| 13. | Public schools are doing a good job of preparing kids for the future. | 3.9 | 15.0 |
| 14. | It is exciting to be at school. | 4.2 | 13.5 |
| 15. | School is the center of learning for the community. | 4.7 | 5.5 |

## Home Involvement Inventory

Parents were also asked to complete a Home Involvement Inventory which was designed to obtain estimates of how much time parents were spending at home with their children in educational activities. A number of different activities with the potential

for providing educational experiences were listed on the inventory. These are presented in Table 8.

As shown in the table, parents spent the greatest amount of "educational time" with their children while watching television. There was a significant difference between parents at the two schools in terms of the amount of time spent discussing material from viewed on television. The parents at the West View School Program reported spending nearly four times as much time discussing television as the parents at Jonesborough. Parents also spend a significant amount of time listening to children's stories (Mean=4.7). Parents spend much less time reading to their children (Mean=2.8).

Several open-ended questions were included on the Home Involvement Inventory to assess the extent to which parents worked at home with their children. A summary of the comments is presented below while the entire list of comments may be found in Appendix N.

1. List things you do at home to stimulate your child's language skills. How much time do you spend ?

The parents listed a number of different strategies for stimulating their children's language skills at home. Several of the respondents noted that they often help their children sound out words by breaking them down and then sounding them out correctly. Several others reported that they read outloud to their children or that the children read to the parents. These represented the two primary strategies listed.

2. List things you do at home to help your child understand elementary math concepts.

A number of the parents indicated that they used specific strategies at home to facilitate an understanding of basic math concepts. Several parents indicated that they try to make a game out of daily activities. One parent reported that "we play games with math books and count socks as we sort them", while another reported that "[we learn math while] cooking together [or] grocery shopping". Many of the strategies were connected to the math books. Several parents highlighted the importance of helping their children work out math problems.

3. List things you do at home to help your child be better prepared to function in school. How much time do you spend?

A variety of responses were given to this item. There was, only one real theme that stood out among the responses. Many of the parents noted the importance of helping students focus on homework. One parent reported that "we have at least 30 minutes-60 minutes per day working on spelling, reading and just

discussing what we did that day" while another noted that "[we] go over her school work, spelling words, math problems, questions and concerns". Another parent described a much more broad strategy for helping children by suggesting that parent involvement in the school activities leads to better student performance. This parent indicated that the children should "eat properly, sleep properly, [parents should] discuss the days' events, talk about problems, attend school functions and volunteer in the classroom".

Table 8. Mean Number of Hours Parents Spent in Educational Activities at Home With Their Children During the Family Math Programs at West View Elementary and Jonesborough Elementary Schools

| Type of Activity | West View (n=5) Mean | Rank | Jonesborough (n=7) Mean | Rank | Total (n=12) Mean | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Read aloud to Child | 2.3 | 6 | 3.1 | 3 | 2.8 | 4 |
| Listen to Child's Stories | 7.3 | 2 | 3.3 | 1 | 4.7 | 2 |
| Discuss Current Events | 1.6 | 9 | 3.2 | 2 | 2.5 | 6 |
| Tell Stories From Pictures | 1.5 | 10 | 1.9 | 8 | 1.7 | 9 |
| Work to Say Words Correctly | 3.5 | 3 | 2.2 | 5.5 | 2.8 | 3 |
| Watch TV and Discuss | 8.6 | 1 | 2.2 | 5.5 | 5.1 | 1* |
| Play Number Games | 2.6 | 5 | 1.5 | 9 | 2.0 | 8 |
| Count Objects | 2.2 | 7 | 2.4 | 4 | 2.3 | 7 |
| Discuss Shapes and Sizes | 1.6 | 8 | .5 | 10 | .9 | 10 |
| Work on Math or Language Problems | 3.4 | 4 | 2.1 | 7 | 2.7 | 5 |

*A statistically significant difference existed in the priority placed on this item by parents in the two schools, as assessed using the Mann-Whitney U-test with alpha = .05.

## Student Orientations Toward Learning Inventory

An assessment tool, the Student Orientation to Learning was constructed to parallel the Parent Orientation to Learning Inventory. Although the instrument was administered to a group

of students whose parents participated in the Family Math Program, the results are not portrayed because all students responded in the same way to the instrument. They all reported having very favorable views toward education and the educational process. The instrument really only demonstrated the early enthusiasm that the children had for education and learning.

## Follow-up Interviews With Family Math Participants

Telephone interviews were held with ten parent participants in the Family Math Program. The participants responded to two basic questions; 1) Has there been anything in particular that has happened since the program that you would say is a result of the program ? and 2) If you were a radio advertiser and you were doing a commercial for this program and trying to get more people to attend it next year, what would you say about it ? Although only two questions were asked, additional probes were used to elicit more detailed information.

All of those interviewed indicated strong positive feeling about the program. One person summed it up this way "I really enjoyed the program. I thought it was very helpful. I think that if anybody took it they would really benefit from it". Different people, however, liked the program for different reasons. Several of the respondents felt that the smallness of the classes made the program comfortable and appealing. Several other respondents indicated that they enjoyed the program because it gave them a chance to work with their child while having fun. One parent described it this way; "I enjoyed it. It was something we could do together. I would like to see this program grow. It brings the parent and child closer together. It gives you some common ground to have fun". Another parent indicated that "their are times when a parent doesn't have time for a child, and this provided a great opportunity for togetherness". Another parent summed up her feelings this way; "I think what appealed to me was it was what I was actually doing one on one with my daughter and in this day and age there is just not enough time...I think that it would appeal to people if they could spend an hour one day per week--quality with each other".

Various outcomes of the program were mentioned. Several parents mentioned that the program was really going to help their children with future academic work. Another group of responding parents noted the impact that the program had on the children's interest in using calculators. One parent exclaimed that there was a big difference between interest in the Family Math Program and regular school math program. According to that parent the difference was "probably [due to] just working on the calculator. She had never used one of those before and said she liked it a lot". Another parent explained that the calculator had "become a real treat to his daughter" and that she "has become more aware of the different things that she can do now".

Another parent described the program as a confidence building experience for her daughter. She described it this way; "I really thought that it was really well worth it and I hope that they can continue doing so....I know it changed my daughter. She was just starting to learn tri-tables and she was really scared. You know she was afraid. She thought this was third grade stuff and she couldn't do it. But now it is just like, hey, I can do that. It just takes time, it takes practice, the numbers are not scary to her anymore. She is not intimidated by numbers". Other parent noted that another reason the program is successful is because it is taught such that math becomes fun for the children. One parent characterized it this way; "I would say possibly the biggest thing that it does for the child is that it takes away the drudgery. I believe the biggest selling point of this program is that it takes the drudgery out..where you sit and work problems and count on your fingers. You turn it into a game..it encourages people".

There was some indication that some of the children whose parents were interviewed really were not having any trouble in school. For example, one parent indicated that "I know that [child] enjoyed it. He's really never had any trouble with math. He just wanted for us to participate together". Another parent noted that her son was "more or less gifted in the area of math". Another parent indicated that the participation was wonderful as an enrichment but noted that "I don't even know if she needed it. She is an A student but she is very eager to learn anything new". In many cases it appeared that the program was a valuable enrichment for children who were already very capable, in addition to being useful for those who were not performing so well.

Several parents indicated that the program was held at very convenient times while two others said they really liked the program because of the small group atmosphere. There were several concerns about the program that came up in the interviews. One of the most frequent comments concerned the length of the program. Several parents mentioned that they would liked to have been able to spend more time in the Family Math Program and that it ended too quickly. Given the high quality of the learning experience, many parents expressed surprise that more parents were not involved. Several parents made comments such as "I am very surprised that there were not more people than there were" or "I thought that a lot more people would be there than were there".

The interviews revealed that parents and children all enjoyed the Family Math Program because it gave them a friendly environment in which parent and child could work together to solve math problems. They also thoroughly enjoyed the hands on approach. While the participants felt the times and locations were convenient, they were very surprised that there were not



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more people in attendance. Many expressed a desire to see the program not only continued, but expanded in the coming years.

**Program Summary**

When considering all of the relevant information, it appears that the Family Math Program was highly successful in promoting a partnership between 1) the parent and child and 2) family and the school. The participants had favorable expectations for their children and had positive orientations toward learning. The quality of the teaching was excellent and the hands-on approach was praised by all of those in attendance. There was some evidence, however, that the program may not have been reaching those students in the system who were most in need of skill building and attitude adjustment. Many of the participants were already successful students. The program might also need to be lengthened, as a number of comments suggested that parents felt the program was too short. Several individuals also suggested that the program should advertised more widely so that more parents would be able to benefit.

# PASS--PARENTS ASSISTING SCHOOL SUCCESS

## Background and Purpose of the Program

The PASS program has effectively been used in Tennessee as a model for family/community involvement beginning in 1985. The main intention of PASS is to identify, train, and involve as many interested persons as possible as volunteers. These persons, mainly parents of students, are under the supervision of teachers and other personnel. The results of PASS volunteers program is seem most clearly in its strengthening of the school program and the enrichment of student educational experiences. The program was first introduced into Tennessee in 1985-86 in Washington County with over 200 parents and community volunteers accumulating over 10,000 hours of time. In the five year period since its introduction, Washington County has involved over 900 volunteers and accumulated more than 56,000 contact hours.

The goals of the PASS program are listed below:

1) To strengthen school-community relations through positive participation

2) To relieve teachers of non-teaching duties

3) To assist teachers in providing more individualization of instruction in their classes

4) To provide an opportunity for interested community members to participate effectively in a school program

5) To increase students' motivation for learning

## Specific Activities

The PASS Program for 1989-1990 was coordinated by a full-time paid staff position. Volunteers were trained and organized through a comprehensive program which included the following activities:

1. Trained volunteer coordinators for each individual participating in the program.
2. Updated the Parent Volunteer Manual and made it available to volunteers.
3. Published a parent newsletter every six weeks which includes current activities and programs available to parents.
4. Prepared media releases on system-wide activities.
5. Planned and implemented recognition activities for all PASS volunteers. One of these activities included an appreciation luncheon held in honor of the volunteers.
6. Designed and provided postcards, note cards, and appropriate materials that were sent periodically to encourage continued participation.

7. Assisted Red Cross Clinics in schools that had clinics.
8. Developed a tutorial program called PAIRS (Parents Aiding in Reading Skills) with K-3 teachers.

## Activities Initiated

A program coordinator was hired by Washington County School District to have oversight over activities and to be able to expand the program. In August, 1989 the program coordinator began training parent volunteer coordinators in each individual participating school. Under the guidance of the program coordinator and the school volunteer coordinators, information concerning the program was disseminated to parents in order to promote the program. By October, most schools had been organized and parent volunteers were effectively being used by the district. The PASS program was maintained in all the schools throughout the district as well as the four schools targeted for the LIFE program. Activities continued through the school year.

## PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Program assessment relied mainly upon an examination of participation records and three questionnaires which were administered during the final recognition awards ceremony. Each questionnaire followed the same general format but had different purposes as described below. The questionnaires consisted of a number of statements which allowed for either a Likert-type response or a comment or both.

## Numbers of PASS Volunteer and Contact Hours

The total number of parents participating in the PASS program and the number of contact hours are given in Table 9. As shown in the table, there was a 22% increase in the number of parent contact hours in the volunteer program in the four targeted schools at the south end of the county. The number of volunteers in these schools rose by 12 from 1989 to 1990. This represents a 40% increase in the number of volunteers in the schools. In contrast, there was a 7.3% increase in contact hours for the other elementary schools in the county. These schools also had a gain of 18 parent volunteers from 1989 to 1990, which was a 13% increase in actual numbers.

Table 9. Total Number of Parent Volunteer and Contact Hours on the PASS Program During 1989 and 1990, by School and Grade Level

| | Number of Volunteers | | | | | | Contact Hours | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | K-3 | | 4-8 | | Other | | | | |
| | 89 | 90 | 89 | 90 | 89 | 90 | 1989 | 1990 | %Change |
| **Targeted Southern Elementary Schools** | | | | | | | | | |
| ASBURY | 7 | 10 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 400 | 500 | 25% |
| LAMAR | 6 | 8 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 350 | 400 | 22% |
| SOUTH CENTRAL | 3 | 5 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 150 | 210 | 40% |
| WEST VIEW | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 250 | 300 | 20% |
| Subtotal | 20 | 28 | 5 | 7 | 5 | 7 | 1150 | 1410 | 22% |
| **Other Elementary Schools** | | | | | | | | | |
| Boones Creek El. | 36 | 33 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 10 | 2250 | 2347 | 4% |
| Fall Branch | 8 | 9 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 450 | 562 | 25% |
| Gray | 32 | 30 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 2350 | 2400 | 2% |
| Jonesborough El. | 35 | 36 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 9 | 2200 | 2500 | 13% |
| Sulpher Springs | 0 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 400 | 400 | 0% |
| Subtotal | 110 | 117 | 18 | 19 | 16 | 26 | 7650 | 8209 | +7.3% |
| **Middle Schools** | | | | | | | | | |
| Boones Creek Md. | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 200 | 250 | 25% |
| Jonesborough Md. | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 100 | 150 | 50% |
| Subtotal | 0 | 0 | 6 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 300 | 400 | 33% |
| **High Schools** | | | | | | | | | |
| D. Boone HS | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 4 | 200 | 150 | -25% |
| D. Crockett HS | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 75 | 100 | 33% |
| Subtotal | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 8 | 275 | 250 | -9.0% |
| Totals | 141 | 145 | 29 | 32 | 31 | 47 | 9516 | 10269 | +7.9% |

These results provide evidence of the increase in parent involvement in the elementary schools that has taken place since the implementation of the LIFE Program. While increases have occurred in all elementary schools from the county, the most dramatic increase (as a percentage of previous activity) has occurred in those schools at the southern end of the county.

## Life Parent Assessment Form

The LIFE Program Assessment Form was given to all volunteers in the schools which participated in the program during the last official class session. In general the results of the assessment were very positive. The following represent summary statements derived from responses given in the assessment. The complete results of the assessment are given in Appendix P.

**Question #1: What did you like about the program ?**

This particular question generated the greatest number of responses and the most involved responses. Several of the comments dealt with relationships between parents and teachers. Most of these comments can best be summarized by this one quote: "I was able to meet and become acquainted with the various teachers. I was also made more aware of the stress and the work teachers have". One parent's comments encapsulated the comments of several others who noted the bonding that occurred between parent, student, and teacher. This parent wrote that the program "brings parents, teachers, and children closer together. Also it gets parents to interact with each other". A third summary statement indicated an element of surprise that parents could have an effect on the education system in general and specifically with their child. This parent noted; "it gave me a chance to learn about what was going on in my child's education, and the fact that my being there to help might have made a difference".

**Question #2: What didn't you like about the program ?**

The most frequently voiced complaint dealt with facilities. In one way or another over half the responses indicated that there was "nowhere to work" or that rooms and supplies needed to be available at "all times". A few people felt that the program was too loosely structured and could have been more organized.

**Question #3: Did this program cooperate or compete with other school activities? In what ways did it cooperate or compete?**

There were no responses which indicated that the PASS Program competed with any other school activities. Most responses observed that the program complimented other activities. Several comments pointed out a high degree of cooperation with "P.T.A. and ballgames". A few parents also observed that the program cooperated in that it helped free teachers up for other tasks.

**Question #4: In what ways was the program helpful?**

The comments to this question were primarily split between two major thoughts. One dealt with the volunteers gaining a heightened awareness and appreciation for the schools and the teachers and is perhaps best depicted by this quote: "It helped me have a closeness with the school and its administration, which in turn helped my children". A second prevailing thought was similar to that expressed above in question 3, that "it gave teachers more time with their children".

**Question #5: Because of this program, I have become more involved in my child's education.**

Parents generally strongly agreed with this statement (see results below). One parent noted that because of the program "I know how my children are doing in their classrooms and how I can help them improve in their weak areas".

| Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| 35 | 15 | 2 | 0 |

**Question #6: Because of this program, I feel better about the school.**

Again, most parents strongly agreed with this statement. One parent expressed her feelings in this way: "I feel the school is a big part of my life as I spend a lot of time there. I feel very proud of it". Another parent voiced some disagreement with the statement and wrote that "because of being in the school during the day, I see things I do not agree with and children being talked to or treated in ways that are not part of our home life".

| Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| 31 | 18 | 1 | 0 |

**Question #7: Because of this program, my child's skills have improved.**

Parents were less strongly in agreement with this statement and there were fewer comments expressed. One parent wrote that she felt her child was more interested in school because he knew "mom is interested".

| Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| 18 | 25 | 6 | 0 |

**Question #8: Because of this program, my child's attitude has improved.**

There were no negative comments expressed for this statement but several parents indicated that their children's attitudes were good to prior to the program. A particular comment noted that "my child likes the idea of mom working at her school and tries harder because of it".

| Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| 13 | 30 | 6 | 0 |

**Question #9: Because of this program, my child's behavior has improved.**

Several parents disagreed with this statement commenting that they felt the program did not effect their child's behavior. A few comments observed that their child's behavior improved because they knew their parent was in the school.

| Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| 12 | 22 | 11 | 1 |

**Question #10: Because of this program, I am better able to help my child.**

Survey answers and the comments indicated that the majority of parents felt their abilities to help their children had significantly increased. One parent went so far as to say, "I can understand her problems and insecurities and can help her overcome them as well as seeing the areas she needs improvement and help in".

| Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| 25 | 24 | 3 | 0 |

**Question #11: I would recommend this program to other parents.**

No comments indicated that volunteers would not recommend this program to other parents. In fact, the vast majority strongly agreed with this statement. Several comments suggested that all parents should be involved in their child's school system. One positive comment came from a grandparent volunteer.

| Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|---|---|---|
| 39 | 16 | 0 | 0 |

**Additional Comments:**

The survey instrument allowed for additional comments following the principal portion of the questionnaire. Almost all of the additional comments, with the exception of a couple, were very favorable towards the program. The statement below is very representative of the comments from parents:

> "I think this program is great and recommend it to every parent. . . It has been a real learning experience for me . . . and has given me a chance to grow personally. This program is essential to help maintain the quality of education required for our children".

**Parent Expectations Assessment Form (PEAF)**

The PEAF was developed to gather information regarding parental expectations of their children. The PEAF was administered to program participants at the conclusion of the program at the recognition ceremony. The PEAF was designed to measure the extent to which parents had positive educational expectations for their children. The scale values ranged from a high of 5 (Strongly agree) to a low of 1 (strongly disagree). The mean or average scores on each of the items are presented in Table 1, along with ranks. The results of this assessment indicate that parents held very positive educational expectations for their children. On nearly all of the positively worded items, respondents expressed a positive response as reflected in the high mean values. The respondents did disagree with the statements that "My child will probably drop out of school before he or she graduates" (Mean=1.2), that "It is not important that my child stays in school until he or she graduates" (Mean = 1.3), and that "it is not that important that my child graduate from high school" (Mean = 1.1). Item 5 "School will provide the knowledge and skills necessary to obtain a job" indicated the greatest level of uncertainty (mean = 3.8). All of the responses to the scale are compiled and provided in Table 10.

The PEAF included two final questions which provided parents with opportunities to make some brief comments. The full comments are given in Appendix O.

Question 11: Please take a few minutes and describe what educational goals you have for your child.

Several of the responses to this question reflected the parents desire to see their children attend college. For example, one parent stated that "I would like to see my children graduate from college because without college you do not have as many opportunities". Other parents were concerned that their children be able to reach their full potential and that they be given the amount of education that they would need in order to find "some occupation which brings joy and fulfillment".

Question 12: Has your participation in this program changed the expectations that you have for your child's education? If so, how have the expectations changed?

None of the comments from parents indicated that their expectations had not changed as a result of this program. Although expectations apparently did not change, several parents reported a change in attitude in answering this question. For example, one parent responded "No, but I now realize what a large role I need to play to encourage other parents to have high expectations and for the community as a whole, as voters and taxpayers, to have high expectations as well". Another parent

wrote, "From my experience in my son's class this year I feel much better about his education. He has a wonderful teacher, and the year has been an excellent experience".

Table 10. Summary of Parent Responses to the Parent Expectations Assessment Form (PEAF) at the Completion of the PASS program

| | ITEM | MEAN | RANK |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | I believe that my child will enjoy school until he or she graduates. | 4.2 | 6.0 |
| 2. | My child will succeed in school. | 4.3 | 5.0 |
| 3. | My child will be a good student throughout his or her school years. | 4.4 | 3.5 |
| 4. | My child will probably drop out of school before he or she graduates. | 1.2 | 9.0 |
| 5. | School will provide the knowledge and skills necessary to obtain a job. | 3.8 | 7.0 |
| 6. | My child should stay in school for as long as possible. | 4.7 | 2.0 |
| 7. | It is not important that my child stays in school until he or she graduates. | 1.3 | 8.0 |
| 8. | My child will one day attend a college or university. | 4.4 | 3.5 |
| 9. | Our family encourages my child to go as far as he or she can in school. | 4.9 | 1.0 |
| 10. | While it would be nice, it is not that important that my child graduate from high school. | 1.1 | 10.0 |

Parent Orientation to Learning Inventory

The Parent Orientation to Learning Inventory was given during the last session of the PASS Program. This questionnaire was designed to gather information on parental perceptions of learning and education. All items received a positive response on the questionnaire. Parents accordant in expressing their strong agreement in two areas: "It is important that a child goes as far as he or she can in school" (mean = 5.0) and "Education should play a big part in any child's future" (mean = 5.0).

While this perhaps is not surprising, it does demonstrate the high degree of value which parents place on education for their children. Item 13 "Public schools are doing a good job of preparing kids for the future" (mean = 3.7) received the least amount of positive feedback indicating that parents were somewhat pessimistic about the job that schools were doing in preparing their children for the future. All the responses to the questionnaire have been compiled and are reported in Table 11.

Table 11. Summary of Parent Responses to the Parent Orientation to Learning Inventory at the Completion of the PASS Program

| | ITEM | MEAN | RANK |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | I really like to learn new things. | 4.8 | 4.5 |
| 2. | Learning is enjoyable. | 4.8 | 4.5 |
| 3. | I am good at learning. | 4.4 | 13.0 |
| 4. | It is important that a child goes as far as he or she can in school. | 5.0 | 1.5 |
| 5. | I know when I need to learn new things. | 4.5 | 10.5 |
| 6. | Education should play a big part in any child's future. | 5.0 | 1.5 |
| 7. | It is important that people learn how to be effective learners. | 4.8 | 4.5 |
| 8. | I love to learn new things. | 4.8 | 4.5 |
| 9. | I like to talk about new ideas. | 4.6 | 8.0 |
| 10. | Every year I learn several new things on my own. | 4.5 | 10.5 |
| 11. | I have a lot of natural curiosity. | 4.5 | 10.5 |
| 12. | I enjoy reading. | 4.7 | 7.0 |
| 13. | Public schools are doing a good job of preparing kids for the future. | 3.7 | 15.0 |
| 14. | It is exciting to be at school. | 4.3 | 14.0 |
| 15. | School is the center of learning for the community. | 4.5 | 10.5 |

## Program Summary

The PASS component of the LIFE program continues to be a powerful program for strengthening school-community relations. The program has encouraged parents to take an active role in the education of their children. This active role has increased parental sensitivity to teachers and has allowed them to be more sympathetic toward teachers. In like manner, teachers have gained a heightened awareness of the value of volunteers as they have proven to be very successful in relieving teachers of non-teaching duties and thereby providing more opportunity and time to be involved with students.

# PRE-KINDERGARTEN SCREENING
# &
# SUMMER ENRICHMENT PROGRAMS

## Background and Purpose of the Program

While there is funding available for several Head Start Programs within Washington County, there are none associated with the Washington County School System. In response to the need for identifying and providing services for students "at risk" prior to entrance into kindergarten, the county school system implemented a Pre-Kindergarten Screening Program, in which children from the county were screened for physical, social and intellectual development. Those children identified "at-risk" were then provided with a limited Summer Pre-Kindergarten Enrichment Program. The program has traditionally been funded at the local level and has utilized career ladder teachers as instructors. The primary purpose of the program was to identify students, prior to kindergarten, who might be "at-risk" of having difficulty in kindergarten. Those students were then provided with a supportive summer program prior to entrance in kindergarten. Instructors work on building those skills necessary for success in kindergarten, but which were found to be lacking in the early screening. An additional Pre-First Grade Enrichment Program was developed for a small number of students identified "at-risk" prior to entrance into first grade.

## Specific Activities

The 1989-90 Pre-Kindergarten program was conducted by career ladder teachers from the Washington County School System. Screening of students was conducted at the time of pre-registration during March, 1990. The Brigance K-1 Basic Screening Assessment was utilized to identify students who might be labeled "at-risk". In addition, the children were given vision/hearing and speech/language screening tests. Those students who scored one standard deviation below the group mean were identified as having low scores on the Brigance and having a possible need for a pre-kindergarten enrichment program. In addition to low scores on the Brigance, students were also selected on the basis of teacher recommendations, and the need for social skill development, as observed during the pre-screening program. The sessions were conducted at different locations in the county. The times and locations for these programs are presented in Table 12.

Table 12. Locations, Times and Characteristics of the Summer Pre-Kindergarten Enrichment Programs Offered By the Washington County School System for the 1989-90 School Year

| Location | Dates | Sessions | Length |
|---|---|---|---|
| Boones Creek Elementary | June 4-29 | 5 days/week | 8-11am |
| Gray Elementary | June 4-29 | 5 days/week | 8-11am |
| Jonesborough Elementary | June 4-29 | 5 days/week | 8-11am |
| Sulpher Springs Elementary | June 4-29 | 5 days/week | 8-11am |

**Activities Initiated**

In each of the schools there were children identified as being "at-risk", in addition to several other children not identified as "at-risk" who were also included in the program to make provide a more heterogeneous classroom environment. For the purposes of this analysis, those students scoring below the 75 percentile on the pretest were considered "at-risk", while those scoring above this level were not considered to be "at-risk" and represented a comparison group. In addition to the pre-kindergarten students, in the Jonesborough Program there were five students who attended the same class sessions as part of a Pre-First Grade Enrichment Program. These students had been referred by their Kindergarten teachers and worked on handwriting, math skills, phonetics, sight words, color words and following directions.

## PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Program assessment primarily consisted of examining changes that occurred in the Brigance scores of the children identified as "at-risk" who participated in the Pre-Kindergarten Program.

**Comparison of Pre and Post Assessments on the Brigance K-1 Basic Screening Assessment**

At three of the sites there were a total of forty-three participants in the Summer Enrichment Program. Scores of the "at-risk" and "not at-risk" groups are summarized in Table 13.

Table 13. Summary of Pretest and Posttest Scores on the Brigance K-1 Basic Screening Assessment For Children Identified as At-Risk and Not At-Risk

| | n | Mean | StdDev | Gain | t | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | All Participants | | | | |
| Pretest | 33 | 67.35 | 16.89 | 22.45 | 11.49* | <.001 |
| Posttest | 33 | 89.80 | 13.80 | | | |
| | | At Risk Group | | | | |
| Pretest | 23 | 59.70 | 13.04 | 26.85 | 13.51* | <.001 |
| Posttest | 23 | 86.54 | 15.19 | | | |
| | | Not At-Risk Group | | | | |
| Pretest | 10 | 84.95 | 10.24 | 12.35 | 4.90* | .001 |
| Posttest | 33 | 89.80 | 13.80 | | | |

As shown in the table, there were significant increases in both the "at-risk" and "non at-risk" groups in scores on the Brigance. The at risk students gained an average of 26.85 points in the Brigance, while the not "at-risk" group gained an average of 12.35 points. The probabilities of pretest to posttest differences being this large just by chance were less than .01 for both groups. In interpreting these numbers it should be remembered that the not "at-risk" group scored closer to the highest score (100) on the pretest and therefore did not have as much room for improvement on retesting. Thus, their scores may be the result of the "ceiling" effect.

To obtain an estimate of whether the "at-risk" group achieved at a greater rate than the not "at risk" group, an analysis of covariance was performed. Posttest scores of the two groups were compared after statistically controlling for initial or pretest differences. The results showed that the adjusted posttest scores of the "at-risk" group were higher than those of the not "at-risk" group ($F=3.84$, $df=1,30$, $p=.059$). This indicates that the probability of the adjusted means of the groups being that far apart just by chance was approximately 6%. Due to the small numbers in the samples, the power of these statistical tests was low. The probabilities of these results occurring by chance would have been even smaller, if they had been based on larger samples and had a higher level of statistical power.

**Program Summary**

There is strong evidence that the Pre-Kindergarten Enrichment Program was effective in raising students' readiness for kindergarten, as measured on the Brigance K-1 Basic Screening



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Assessment. This was true for both "at-risk" students and those not "at-risk" or the comparison group. The evidence also indicates that the students identified as "at-risk" achieved at a higher rate than those who were not "at-risk". This appears to be a program that does help those students perform at a higher level on the Brigance. If this assessment measures those abilities that are necessary for successful entrance into kindergarten, the program is serving a very important function in getting these children ready for a successful kindergarten experience.

# TEACHER TRAINING WORKSHOP--DR. REBECCA ISBELL

## Background and Purpose of the Program

Dr. Rebecca Isbell, Associate Professor in the Department of Human Development and Learning at East Tennessee State University conducted a workshop for 30 early elementary teachers from the Washington County School System. Dr. Isbell's presentation focused on Strategies for Involving Parents in the Learning Process in the Early Elementary Years. The workshop was held on Friday afternoon from 3:30 until 5:30 PM. The lecture/discussion method was the primary instructional delivery used in the session.

## Other Relevant Information

Dr. Isbell has been on the faculty at East Tennessee State University for over ten years. She is the Director of the Early Childhood Education Program at the institution and was recently instrumental in developing a new Master's Degree program in Early Childhood Education. She is very active in both regional and national organizations pertaining to early childhood education and is actively involved in conducting inservice programs for teachers around the region. Dr. Isbell is an expert on early childhood development and at the university teaches such courses as "Infancy", "Literacy and the Young Child" and "Theories of Play" and "Developing Curriculum for the Young Child".

# PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

## Teacher Workshop Evaluation

A ten item Teacher Workshop Evaluation form was administered to all those who attended the workshop conducted by Dr. Isbell. The teachers were asked to respond to each of the items on numerical scales that ranged from 7 (excellent) to 1 (poor). The form was given to participants immediately following the completion of the workshop. The results of the workshop evaluations are presented in Table 14.

As shown in the table, the respondents were extremely favorable about the quality of the workshop. All of the ratings fell at the upper end of the rating scale. It is difficult to pull point any obvious strength from the ratings, since they were all so strong. The ratings were highest, however, on the items dealing with the work of the session leader and the appeal of the ideas and concepts that were presented. Another indicator of quality is the fact that 96% of those who responded indicated that they would like to obtain more information about the program. The ratings indicated that the presentation quality was excellent and that participants learned a great deal in the workshop.

Additional written comments were solicited from the participants as a means of supplementing the information obtained on the rating scales. Only three additional comments were obtained. The list of responses can be found in Appendix Q. These comments generally complemented the ratings and reflected the positive feelings the teachers had toward the workshop.

Table 14. Teacher evaluations of Dr. Rebecca Isbell's Workshop on Strategies for Involving Parents in the Learning Process in the Early Elementary Years (n=26)

| Performance Item | | Frequency Distribution of Responses (Percents are given in parentheses) Excellent 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | Poor 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. The organization of session was: | f | 17 | 8 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | % | (65) | (31) | (4) | (0) | (0) | (0) | (0) |
| 2. The objectives of the session were: | f | 17 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | % | (65) | (35) | (0) | (0) | (0) | (0) | (0) |
| 3. The work of the session leader was: | f | 20 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | % | (77) | (23) | (0) | (0) | (0) | (0) | (0) |
| 4. The ideas and concepts presented were: | f | 19 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | % | (73) | (23) | (4) | (0) | (0) | (0) | (0) |
| 5. The activities/teaching strategies utilized in the session were: | f | 15 | 8 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | % | (58) | (31) | (12) | (0) | (0) | (0) | (0) |
| 6. The extent of coverage was: | f | 14 | 9 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | % | (54) | (35) | (12) | (0) | (0) | (0) | (0) |
| 7. The utility of these concepts for working effectively with parents: | f | 17 | 7 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | % | (65) | (27) | (8) | (0) | (0) | (0) | (0) |
| 8. My attendance has provided me with information that should prove to be: | f | 15 | 8 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | % | (58) | (31) | (12) | (0) | (0) | (0) | (0) |
| 9. Overall I would consider this session: | f | 16 | 8 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | % | (62) | (31) | (8) | (0) | (0) | (0) | (0) |

| 10. Would you be interested in obtaining additional information about the topic? | | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|---|
| | f | 25 | 1 |
| | % | (96) | (4) |

**Teacher Self-Assessment**

Participants in the workshop were also asked to respond to a series of questions about the workshop outcomes using the Teacher Self-Assessment. The complete set of responses are given in Appendix R. Response summaries to each of the four items are given below.

1. After participating in this workshop, describe what you see as some of the positive attributes or characteristics of parents that serve as opportunities for the teacher.

The wide variety of responses indicate that the participants did take a great deal of information away from the workshop. For example, in response to item one, comments like the following were made; "Parents know their children best and are the biggest influence" or "Parents can give useful information children--sides of them we [teachers] do not know". Nearly all of the comments highlighted the importance of getting to know the parents and utilizing them as important resources who have a unique perspective on the child's abilities and learning needs.

2. List some things that teachers might suggest to parents as alternate ways of working with children at home.

Many of the participants responded to this item. The responses were varied. For example, some individuals mentioned experiential activities and would suggest to parents that they "take walks for looking for specific things, such as animals, things with circles, three-wheeled vehicles etc.". Many suggested that reading was extremely important. A number of the suggestions centered around establishing greater communication with the child around the home. Participants listed such things as "looking at picture books or magazines and discuss what is happening in the pictures", "Take a walk, and find three green things and two brown things", "Match socks", and "Figure out how many glasses, spoons, etc. are needed to set the table". Many interesting suggestions were provided by the participants.

3. List any new techniques that you have learned that will enable you to help parents develop more positive views of their children as learners and more positive views of education.

The participants indicated that they learned many new techniques that could be used to help parents develop more positive views of learning and education. The respondents mentioned such things as opening a resource lending library for parents, making home visits, writing on age-appropriate handbook, forming parent support groups, sending home positive notes or initiating programs involving children and parents.

4. Identify some specific things that parents can do at home with their children to help them perform at a higher level in school.

The respondents listed many things that parents can do at home to help their children perform at a higher level in school. The list of items included such things as maintaining positive communication, playing games with their children, review with the child papers brought home with a low grade, listen and respond to questions, take children to different places and talk about what they see. The list was long a varied. It appeared that the participants gained a great deal of information for attending the workshop.

Workshop Summary

A review of the Teacher Workshop Evaluations and the Teacher Self-Assessments indicated that the participants were very enthusiastic about the professional development opportunity with Dr. Isbell. They felt good about the presenter and about the information that was presented. Their reactions to the Teacher Self-Assessment also suggested that they took away many practical ideas for increasing parental involvement from the session.

# TEACHER TRAINING WORKSHOP--DR. DAVID SABATINO

## Background and Purpose of the Program

Dr. David Sabatino, Chairman of the Department of Human Development and Learning presented a workshop to 27 special education teachers from the Washington County School System which focused on Successful Strategies for Working With Families of Children in Special Education and Helping Families Access Community Resources. The workshop was held on Friday afternoon from 3:30 until 5:30 PM. The lecture was the primary instructional delivery used in the session.

## Other Relevant Information

Dr. Sabatino was selected for his expertise in the field of special education where he has taught such courses as "Administration of Special Education Programs" and "Introduction to Special Education".

## PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

## Teacher Workshop Evaluation

A ten item Teacher Workshop Evaluation form was administered to all those who attended the workshop conducted by Dr. Sabatino. The teachers were asked to respond to each of the items on numerical scales that ranged from 7 (excellent) to 1 (poor). The form was given to participants approximately two days after the completion of the workshop. The results of the workshop evaluations are presented in Table 15.

As shown in the table, the respondents were generally favorable about the quality of the workshop, with most of the responses falling at the upper end of the response scales. The strength of the workshop appeared to be the interesting nature of the ideas and concepts that were presented and the work of the session leader. Many of the respondents (84%) indicated that they would like to obtain more information about the topic. Participants did not feel as strongly that the extent of coverage had been appropriate or that the concepts and ideas presented had direct utility in working with parents; i.e., it appeared that the participants were interested in how to make greater use of the concepts in professional practice.

As a supplement to the ratings of effectiveness, additional comments were solicited from the participants. A total of eleven of the nineteen respondents made statements about the quality of the program. These comments are provided in Appendix S. A number of the responses alluded to the fact that the speaker was very knowledgeable and interesting to listen to. These individuals made statements such as; [the instructor] was insightful and illustrated points with real-life experiences which were interesting and applicable" or "the speaker was well

versed and knowledgeable". While there did seem to be agreement that the speaker was friendly and sincere, several of the respondents indicated that the workshop needed to be more practical in its focus and should highlight information that the participants did not already know. For example, one respondent noted that "The speaker was very easy to listen to, knew what he was talking about, but I felt we needed more on how to deal with parents (which was to be the topic of the session)". Another expressed his or her view this way; "When I go to a workshop I expect to have some 'things' or knowledge to return to school with. [the instructor did not tell us anything we did not already know".

The open-ended comments suggested that the personal style of the instructor was well received, while the message received mixed reviews from participants. Those who were not favorable seemed to believe that the workshop should be more applied and should result in new understandings about how to work with parents.

Teacher Self-Assessment

Participants in the workshop were also asked to respond to a series of questions about the workshop outcomes using the Teacher Self-Assessment. The full set of responses are given in Appendix U. A summary of the responses follows:

1) After participating in this workshop, describe what you see as important characteristics of families that need to be considered when planning for special education services.

Most of the responses to this question centered on the importance of understanding the unique make-up of each family and how that make-up influences the quality of parent/school communication. For example, one participant noted that "each individual family has individual and specific characteristics just as each individual in that family does. Family size, dynamics, participation of members, acceptance of the handicapping condition, and history of services and contacts already med are important considerations". Participants gained an understanding of the importance of parent involvement in the education of the special needs child. Nearly all of the respondents to this item indicated that they had a deeper appreciation of how important it was that families be involved at an early age. One representative respondent put it this way; "They [parents] must take advantage of services at an early age".

The two major themes associated with this question were 1) It is critical to get parents and families involved in developing the educational program for the child with special needs at an early age and 2) there are many interrelated characteristics of families that must be considered when trying to work with them

and all of these characteristics influence how the parents (family) will respond.

Table 15. Teacher evaluations of Dr. David Sabatino's Workshop on Working With Parents of Children In Special Education and Accessing Community Resources (n=19)

| Performance Item | | Frequency Distribution of Responses (Percents are given in parentheses) Excellent 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | Poor 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | The organization of session was: | f 5 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| | | % (26) | (26) | (16) | (16) | (5) | (11) | (0) |
| 2. | The objectives of the session were: | f 4 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| | | % (21) | (26) | (21) | (16) | (5) | (11) | (0) |
| 3. | The work of the session leader was: | f 5 | 6 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| | | % (26) | (32) | (16) | (11) | (5) | (11) | (0) |
| 4. | The ideas and concepts presented were: | f 7 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| | | % (37) | (26) | (16) | (16) | (0) | (5) | (0) |
| 5. | The activities/teaching strategies utilized in the session were: | f 4 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 0 |
| | | % (21) | (26) | (21) | (5) | (21) | (5) | (0) |
| 6. | The extent of coverage was: | f 3 | 3 | 7 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 0 |
| | | % (16) | (16) | (37) | (16) | (5) | (11) | (0) |
| 7. | The utility of these concepts for working effectively with parents: | f 4 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| | | % (21) | (26) | (16) | (11) | (16) | (5) | (5) |
| 8. | My attendance has provided me with information that should prove to be: | f 5 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| | | % (26) | (26) | (21) | (11) | (5) | (5) | (5) |
| 9. | Overall I would consider this session: | f 5 | 5 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| | | % (26) | (26) | (11) | (26) | (0) | (5) | (5) |
| 10. | Would you be interested in obtaining additional information about the topic? | | | Yes | | No | | |
| | | f | | 16 | | 3 | | |
| | | % | | (84) | | (16) | | |

2) List some ways in which the school or special education professional can serve as a "broker" in accessing community resources.

The responses to this question indicated that participants generally gained an awareness of how important it was for special education personnel to know what other social agencies were available in the community and then be able to pass this information along to parents. While nearly all indicated how important this brokering function was, several suggested that they really knew very little about what agencies were available. For example one participant commented that "the school personnel need to be informed of what the community resources are before they can 'broker'. I am not aware of all of the available resources, the referral procedures, or the cost". It appears that the participants in the workshop generally 1) developed an understanding of the important role the teacher can play in connecting parents to community agencies and 2) recognized that they really did not know a great deal about the resources that were available in their communities.

3) List any new techniques that you have learned that will enable you to more effectively access community resources.

There were few responses to this item. There did not seem to be a recurrent theme in the responses that were obtained. None of the individuals listed specific techniques that could be used. One noted that a list of resources should be maintained and that an umbrella organization to coordinate referral efforts. Another respondent indicated that the teacher could learn through the newspaper or discussion with colleagues. One respondent noted that while no new techniques were learned in the session, it would be a very useful topic for an inservice session. Participants did not indicate that they felt they had learned many new techniques that would help them access community resources.

**Workshop Summary**

A review of the Teacher Workshop Evaluations and the Teacher Self-Assessments indicated that the participants generally enjoyed the session. They felt that the speaker was knowledgeable and interesting. They also recognized the message that teachers play an important part in making the home-school partnership work. They also developed further their understanding about the important role the teacher can play in accessing community resources. At the same time, some of the teachers expressed the opinion that the session be more experiential (less lecture) with more attention given to the development of practical strategies for bringing about better parent/school relationships.

# TEACHER TRAINING WORKSHOP--MR. LORENZO WYATT

## Background and Purpose of the Program

Mr. Lorenzo Wyatt, former principal and adjunct professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis at East Tennessee State University presented a workshop to 11 Chapter 1 teachers from the Washington County School System. Mr. Wyatt's presentation focused on Strategies for Building Parent/School Partnerships. The workshop was held on Friday afternoon from 3:30 until 5:30 PM. The lecture/discussion method was the primary instructional delivery used in the session.

## Other Relevant Information

Mr. Wyatt had served as an elementary school principal for 25 years prior to his retirement in 1989. He was well known for his ability to get parents involved in activities at the school. He was principal in a school with a heterogeneous socioeconomic mix that was located in the center of a small city in Upper East Tennessee. Since his retirement he has been employed on a part-time basis in the Department of Educational Leadership at East Tennessee State University, where he teaches courses on "School and Community Relations" and "Introduction to Educational Administration".

# PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

## Teacher Workshop Evaluation

A ten item Teacher Workshop Evaluation form was administered to all those who attended the workshop conducted by Mr. Wyatt. The teachers were asked to respond to each of the items on numerical scales that ranged from 7 (excellent) to 1 (poor). The form was given to participants approximately two days after the completion of the workshop. The results of the workshop evaluations are presented in Table 16.

As shown in the table, the respondents were generally favorable about the quality of the workshop. Most of the ratings fell at the upper end of the rating scale. Generally the participants felt that the objectives of the workshop were appropriate and that the concepts presented were of interest. Most (86%) of the respondents indicated a desire to learn more about the topic. Although the ratings did not reflect conclusively strong positive or negative feelings about the professional development program, respondents appeared to be less favorable about the teaching methods or strategies that were used in the session.

Additional written comments were solicited from the participants as a means of supplementing the information obtained on the rating scales. Five of the seven respondents made statements about the quality of the program. These comments are

provided in Appendix U. Nearly all of the comments reflected a negative feeling about the applicability of the information for Chapter 1 teachers. Two of the respondents felt that the information would have been more appropriate for an administrative audience. For example one commented this way; "Some of the ideas could only be implemented by a principal. This workshop would benefit principals interested in increasing parent involvement". While none of the respondents felt the information was not useful, they had difficulty in seeing how this related to their positions as Chapter 1 teachers.

Teacher Self-Assessment

Participants in the workshop were also asked to respond to a series of questions about the workshop outcomes using the Teacher Self-Assessment. The full set of comments is given in Appendix V. A summary of those responses follows:

1) After participating in this workshop, describe what you see as some of the positive attributes or characteristics of parents that serve as opportunities for the Chapter I teacher.

This question did not appear to be clear to the respondents as there were no consistent responses. One teacher noted that parents do not seem interested. Another suggested that involvement does cause parents to teach their children behaviors that lead to better learning. Another teacher indicated that parents could be involved in field trips, actively participate in the classroom or work with their children individually at home.

2) List some things or benefits that might result from greater involvement of parents in Chapter I programs.

Three participants responded to this item. Two of the respondents suggested that the first thing to improve would be student achievement. Participants felt that this would occur once students saw that parents felt what they were doing at school was important. They seemed to see a linkage between parent interest/involvement and student self-esteem, which would result in improved performance. One participant summed it up this way; "The most important benefit would be higher student achievement because I feel that parent interest and involvement leads students to believe that their own work at school is important. If they feel that their parents place an emphasis on improvement of grades and reading skills, then students will try harder, have greater self-esteem and have a better attitude towards learning". The participants seemed to believe that there is a strong link between parent involvement and learning.

Table 16. Teacher evaluations of Mr. Lorenzo Wyatt's Workshop on Building Home-School Partnerships (n=7)

| Performance Item | | Frequency Distribution of Responses (Percents are given in parentheses) Excellent 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 | Poor 1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | The organization of session was: | f 1<br>% (14) | 1<br>(14) | 4<br>(57) | 0<br>(0) | 0<br>(0) | 1<br>(14) | 0<br>(0) |
| 2. | The objectives of the session were: | f 2<br>% (29) | 2<br>(29) | 1<br>(14) | 1<br>(14) | 0<br>(0) | 1<br>(14) | 0<br>(0) |
| 3. | The work of the session leader was: | f 1<br>% (14) | 2<br>(29) | 2<br>(29) | 1<br>(14) | 0<br>(0) | 1<br>(14) | 0<br>(0) |
| 4. | The ideas and concepts presented were: | f 2<br>% (29) | 1<br>(14) | 3<br>(43) | 0<br>(0) | 1<br>(14) | 0<br>(0) | 0<br>(0) |
| 5. | The activities/teaching strategies utilized in the session were: | f 1<br>% (14) | 1<br>(14) | 2<br>(29) | 2<br>(29) | 0<br>(0) | 1<br>(14) | 0<br>(0) |
| 6. | The extent of coverage was: | f 1<br>% (14) | 2<br>(29) | 2<br>(29) | 1<br>(14) | 0<br>(0) | 1<br>(14) | 0<br>(0) |
| 7. | The utility of these concepts for working effectively with parents: | f 1<br>% (14) | 2<br>(29) | 2<br>(29) | 1<br>(14) | 0<br>(0) | 1<br>(14) | 0<br>(0) |
| 8. | My attendance has provided me with information that should prove to be: | f 2<br>% (29) | 1<br>(14) | 2<br>(29) | 1<br>(14) | 0<br>(0) | 1<br>(14) | 0<br>(0) |
| 9. | Overall I would consider this session: | f<br>% (0) | NO RESPONSES WERE GIVEN<br>(0) | (0) | (0) | (0) | (0) | (0) |
| 10. | Would you be interested in obtaining additional information about the topic? | | Yes | | | No | | |
| | | f | 6 | | | 1 | | |
| | | % | (86) | | | (14) | | |

3) List any new techniques that you have learned that will enable you to more effectively access community resources.

The respondents listed a number of techniques that could be used to increase parent involvement. These suggestions involved such things as sending out a list of potential projects for parents, involvement in textbook completion celebrations, lending

libraries, videotape checkout process and parent advisory committees. As one participant noted, "the workshop offered many good ideas for parent participation".

**Workshop Summary**

A review of the Teacher Workshop Evaluations and the Teacher Self-Assessments indicated that the participants generally held favorable opinions about the session, although only seven evaluation forms were received. They felt that the concepts were useful and noted that there were practical suggestions given for increasing parent involvement. Several expressed a concern that the focus was on parent involvement from the principals' perspective rather than from the teachers'.

# PARENTING WORKSHOPS--DR. REBECCA ISBELL

## Background and Purpose of the Program

Dr. Rebecca Isbell, Associate Professor in the Department of Human Development and Learning at East Tennessee State University conducted a series of short workshop sessions for nearly 500 parents at Asbury (March 12, 1990), South Central (March 19, 1990), Lamar (April 5, 1990) and West View Schools (March 22, 1990). These four schools are in the southern end of the county. Dr. Isbell, who is a dynamic speaker, spoke to each of these groups for 30 minutes on the topic of "Bringing Out the Best In Your Child". Dr. Isbell emphasized the need to give children a good start during the early development years, understanding their unique developmental needs and developing ways to build a stronger foundation for a successful beginning to school. In addition, 500 booklets entitled "Getting Your Child Ready For Kindergarten" were distributed to parents at the Pre-Kindergarten Screening. Parents of newborns at Johnson City Medical Center Hospital were provided literature on parenting skills and language development.

## Other Relevant Information

Dr. Isbell has been on the faculty at East Tennessee State University for over ten years. She is the Director of the Early Childhood Education Program at the institution and was recently instrumental in developing a new Master's Degree program in Early Childhood Education. She is very active in both regional and national organizations pertaining to early childhood education and is actively involved in conducting inservice programs for teachers around the regional. Dr. Isbell is an expert on early childhood development and at the university teaches such courses as "Infancy", "Literacy and the Young Child" and "Theories of Play" and "Developing Curriculum for the Young Child".

## PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

Given the short duration (thirty minutes) of Dr. Isbell's talk with parents, no evaluation form was utilized to obtain information on the effectiveness of the workshop. Such a process would have been disruptive to the learning process in such a short term session. Given the fact that over 500 people were in attendance, it could be concluded that the session was very successful in reaching a large number of parents of children in the early childhood years from Washington County.

# STUDENT SERVICES PROVIDED

## Background and Purpose of the Program

The school system increased its efforts to identify individuals who were having personal, academic or emotional difficulty and were in need of referral to other relevant community agencies. Two social workers were hired by the school system; one at the northern end of the county and one at the southern end. The major purpose of the program was to assist individuals who might benefit from services provided by other agencies such as the Tennessee Department of Human Services, Comprehensive Community Services, Watauga Mental Health, Association of Retarded Citizens, Washington County Sheriff's Office, East Tennessee State University. The social workers assisted in making the contacts and served as important links between the individuals in need of assistance and the community agencies.

A health educator or family life specialist was also identified on October 27, 1990. The new Family Life Curriculum was implemented on January 8, 1990 and continued through May 25, 1990. A total of 410 Family Life classes were conducted at 11 schools in the county. The Family Life Specialist conducted family life education classes with students in grades 6-8 and health classes in grade 10 in the schools county-wide. The objective of the family life program was to provide instruction in family responsibilities, values, decision-making, realities of teenage pregnancy, HIV/AIDS and birth control.

## PROGRAM ASSESSMENT

### Referrals to Community Agencies

The social worker assigned to the southern end of Washington County reported assisting sixty (60) students and families in securing services from other community agencies between November 1989 and February 1990. This represented a sixty percent increase over services provided during the previous year for the same schools. These referrals were made to the following agencies; Tennessee Department of Human Services, N. E. Commission on Children and Youth, Comprehensive Community Services, Watauga Mental Health, Association of Retarded Citizens, Washington County Sheriff's Office and East Tennessee State University.

### Family Life Instruction and Related Services

Across the county there were a total of 2429 students eligible to participate in the program. Of that number, 2344 actually participated. This amounted to a 97% participation rate county-wide. There were a total of 443 students eligible in Lamar, West View, Asbury and South Central Elementary Schools. Of that number, 432 participated. This represented a 98%

response rate for those four elementary schools at the southern end of the county. Participation in the program was dependent on parental permission. Only 1 percent of the parents actually refused to let their child participate in the program, county-wide. The refusal rate was .5% for students in Lamar, South Central, Asbury and West View Elementary Schools. This high degree of parental permission was an indicator of the support that existed out in the community for this family life program.

Students in grade eight responded to a brief questionnaire designed to look at the impact of the family life classes on their own lives. The results of that evaluation are presented in Table 17.

Table 17. Percent of Positive Responses of Eighth Grade Students To the Family Life Evaluation Form (n=421)

| Item | Percent (%) Positive Responses |
|---|---|
| 1. I can talk openly to my parents about sexual issues. | 54% |
| 2. Family life classes will help me make responsible decisions about sex. | 97% |
| 3. I am more likely to effectively use birth control because of information obtained FLE classes. | 93% |
| 4. Students are more likely to delay sexual activity after having FLE classes. | 80% |
| 5. The lesson most beneficial to me was on: | |
| Puberty, Human Reproduction & Childbirth | 17% |
| Realities of Teen Pregnancy | 25% |
| Sexually Transmitted Disease | 15% |
| HIV/AIDS | 12% |
| Birth Control Demonstration | 28% |

These results indicate the extent to which students felt the Family Life Program would have on their own sexual practices. As shown in the table, students felt that as a result of these programs, they would be able to make better decision about their

own sexual practices and would be more likely to make effective use of birth control.

In addition to the eighth grade survey, a 25 question Family Life Test was administered before the tenth grade Family Life classes were conducted at Daniel Boone High School. The results of this pretest showed that there was a great deal of misinformation about the topics covered in the Family Life Curriculum. Students also had very inaccurate perceptions about the prevalence of sexual activity among their peers. Of the 232 students that took the pretest, 163 (70%) scored 72 or lower, while only nine (4%) scored 88 or higher. On the posttest, however, scores increased considerably. Only 14 (6%) scored 72 or lower, while 176 (73%) scored 88 or higher. This represented a clear gain in knowledge and understanding of those topics covered in the Family Life Program. In addition to student participation, 45 other individuals observed the Family Life classes, including a parent, an assistant superintendent, six principals, two assistant principals, 32 teachers, two guidance counselors and one librarian. Thirty-nine of the observers submitted written statements about the classes that were observed and all of these were favorable. As another indicator of parental involvement in the Family Life Program, 148 parents made written requests that students receive a free booklet on puberty. Fifteen books were checked out of the Family Life Lending Library by parents.

In addition to the Family Life Curriculum, teenage parents (N=16) at David Crockett High School were provided with instruction on parenting, child health issues, family responsibilities, birth control and counseling by Watauga Mental Health and the March of Dimes. Family Counseling on health related issues and abuse was provided or individuals were referred to the appropriate agencies. A Parent Lending Library was also available in each school during the instructional sessions.

Program Summary

These results demonstrate the success that the School Social Work and Family Life Program had during the 19989-90 school year. A significant increase occurred in the number of referrals made to community agencies, as important school to community linkages were built. The Family Life Program not only produced important cognitive and attitudinal changes in students, but also served as a very important source of information for parents. It appears that parent support for this new program was very strong.

## IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

There were four broad goals guiding the LIFE Program. These broad goals were:

GOAL #1: To develop attitudes and understandings that would enable families to become effective partners with their school in the education of their children.

GOAL #2: To develop techniques and practices necessary for effective parenting, capitalizing on the time spent at home.

GOAL #3: To reduce significantly the expenses and energies now directed towards remedial and special education programs by means of a program directed at prevention.

GOAL #4: To provide for the healthy working relationships between parents and schools.

The evaluation results contained in this report suggest that the 1989-90 LIFE Program was very successful in reaching these broad goals. In addition, nearly all of the more specific objectives outlined earlier in the report were achieved. While much of the supporting evidence for this claim can be found in the descriptions of the individual programs, four major findings have been identified which relate directly to these goals. In addition, evidence is provided under each of these findings to demonstrate that the more specific objectives were reached. The specific conclusions were drawn from a synthesis of the evidence that was found to exist in the various programs.

Finding One: The LIFE Program was very effective in developing positive attitudes and understandings of both parents and teachers. This growth has led to the formation of stronger partnerships in the teaching and learning of children.

--- The number of parent volunteers showed a significant increase over previous years, with the greatest increase in actual numbers of volunteers occurring in the elementary schools at the southern end of the county (40%). There was also an increase in parent volunteer contact hours in these schools.

--- 500 parents attended the four workshops conducted by Dr. Rebecca Isbell entitled "Give Your Child The Best". These workshops were located at schools in the southern end of the county where parent involvement had not been as strong in previous years.

--- Five Bowdoin Parent Education Programs resulted in the participation of 47 parents in 587 contact hours. Two Family Math Programs were offered. These programs involved a total of 12 family teams. In all of these programs parents commented on the wonderful opportunity the sessions provided for identifying activities that the family could work on at home as a team. In the case of the Family Math Program, parents and children worked together to learn new math skills.

--- Visitations were made to the homes of children identified as having difficulties in the schools at the southern end of the county.

--- During interviews with parent participants in the Bowdoin and Family Math Programs a number of parents described the feelings of personal and emotional support that they gained from participating in these programs and sharing concerns with other parents in similar situations. While these did not constitute "official" support groups, many parents viewed the experience as being highly supportive and facilitative of their efforts to be effective parents.

--- Parents in the Bowdoin, Family Math and PASS programs expressed very positive educational expectations for their children. They also reported very positive personal orientations to learning and a commitment to the learning process.

Finding Two: The Bowdoin Parent Education Program and Family Math Program were very successful in helping parents understand the developmental needs of their young children and develop techniques and practices that could be used at home to teach math and language skill development. This success was particularly evident among parents of pre-school and early elementary age children. The programs were not, however, developed to help parents of older elementary, middle school or high school age children.

--- 117 different parents checked materials out of the Bowdoin Parent Education Lending Libraries.

--- There was a significant pretest to posttest change in parent knowledge about the parent as teacher, as measured on the Bowdoin Inventory of Parent Beliefs and Practices.

--- Participants in the Family Math Program reported having learned a number of different strategies for teaching basic math concepts at home while having fun at the same time.

--- While the Family Focus Newspaper Program was not conducted, other programs were very effective in promoting the concept of "home as classroom". Many participants indicated how the programs had helped them become much more involved in the education of their children.

Finding Three: The LIFE Program was successful in providing programs and services which may significantly reduce future expenses and energies directed toward remedial and "special" education programs. The program represented an early investment designed to keep students out of these "special" programs.

--- The comprehensive Pre-Kindergarten Screening Program was conducted in the spring, 1990.

--- A total of 38 students participated in a Pre-Kindergarten Summer Enrichment Program.

--- Five students were included in a new Pre-First Grade Enrichment Program which focused on the development of handwriting, math skills, phonetics, sight words, color words and the ability to follow directions.

--- Pretest to posttest scores on the Brigance K-1 Basic Screening Assessment increased by 27 points for the children identified as "at risk" in the Pre-Kindergarten Enrichment Program.

--- There was a 60 percent increase in the number of referrals made to outside community agencies.

--- A new Family Life Program was initiated in the schools which gained the support of parents and led to significant increases in the amount of knowledge high school students had about family matters and human sexuality.

Finding Four: The LIFE Program forged many new and exciting relationships between parents and the schools. These new attitudes and relationships will be extremely important in the lives of these children as they move through the school years. The impact of the positive and cooperative attitudes initiated and nurtured during the 1989-1990 school year will felt for many years to come.

--- Interviews with parents reflected the very positive feelings they had developed toward the school system as a result of the LIFE Programs. A number of participants commented that they were extremely grateful that the school would consider sponsoring such programs for them.

--- The "celebrations" that occurred at the end of the Bowdoin and PASS Programs were examples of ways in which the excitement and enthusiasm that had been generated in these programs could be shared.

--- 500 brochures entitled "Getting Your Child Ready For Kindergarten" were distributed to parents during the Pre-Kindergarten Screening Program.

--- Additional resource materials such as "Reading and Learning Tips For Parents", "Learning Is For Everyone" and the Bowdoin Materials were made available to parents.

--- Parents of newborns at Johnson City Medical Center Hospital were provided literature on parenting skills and language development.

--- 30 teachers of grades K-2, 27 special education teachers and 11 Chapter I teachers attended workshops on how to work more effectively with parents in meeting the needs of the child. For the most part, teachers felt these programs were very useful professional development activities.

The findings mentioned above and supporting evidence contained in the more extensive report have led to the following conclusions and recommendations:

Conclusion #1: The 1989-1990 LIFE program was very successful in meeting the broad goals of creating new parent-school partnerships and funding for the program should be continued or expanded. The Bowdoin, Family Math and PASS Programs were all extremely effective in forging stronger home-school partnerships.

Conclusion #2: While the current program is highly successful, LIFE programs should be developed which involve parents in the education of older children. These new programs should address the parenting needs of parents of older children; i.e., children in the later elementary grades, middle school and high school.

Conclusion #3: A major goal of the LIFE program was the development of an attitude among parents and teachers alike, that Learning Is For Everyone. This program had a very real focus on the education of adults in the community, not just the learning of children. This adult education focus was appreciated by parents and teachers and has been mentioned in the literature as one of the true marks of an effective parent involvement

program. The LIFE program should continue to promote the development of a "learning community", with the school serving as the center of that community.

Conclusion #4: The instructors in the LIFE Programs were excellent and received very favorable reviews from parents. The school system should continue to recognize these teachers for their ability to relate so effectively to the parents in the community. They could perhaps be utilized as resources in helping other colleagues to become effective adult educators.

Conclusion #5: While the LIFE Programs were effective in meeting the needs of many parents, greater emphasis should be placed on providing services to those "hard-to-reach" parents in the community. Those who participated in the programs were not always the parents who had little previous contact with the school.

Conclusion #6: The amount of time allotted for LIFE programs should be increased. Across many of the programs, parents indicated a desire to know more about topics and to spend more time on lessons or activities. Additional resources will be required to expand the offerings to meet these expressed needs.

Conclusion #7: The focus of the 1989-1990 LIFE Program was primarily on the development of attitudes related to student learning. This was a very effective approach. The results, however, indicate that a number of parents participated in the LIFE Program as a means of finding emotional support for their parenting activities. As part of future LIFE activities, the school system might consider developing "parenting support groups" for parents with children of all ages, in which parents come together to discuss parenting topics or issues, that are not directly tied to helping students learn more effectively.

Conclusion #8: The assessments made during this first year of the LIFE Program were by necessity short-term in nature. Much of the assessment process focused on parent and teacher perceptions of program quality, the extent of learning and behavioral change. Follow-up assessments should be considered which simultaneously track parent involvement and student performance over time.

Conclusion #9: Additional funds should be available so that alternate methods can be used to advertise future parent involvement programs. A number of parents indicated that a broader participation in the programs could have been obtained if different types of media had been used to advertise.